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THE GAMESPOT GAME GUIDE TO

HALO

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HALO 2 IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF MICROSOFT, 2004

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If you need to be told what Halo is, well, welcome to the sunlit surface world; hopefully you will find it comfortable after living in a cave for the past few years. We call this land America. In it, we have video games, one of which is Halo. Released three years ago as a launch title for the Xbox, Halo told the story of the war between humanity and the Covenant, a collection of races bent on activating an ancient and powerful weapon, which came in the form of the massive ringworld called Halo, for the purpose of fulfilling a religious prophecy. Had they succeeded, they would've managed to end all life in the Milky Way, but it was Master Chief who managed to foil their plans, by destroying Halo.

As Halo 2 opens, a new battle erupts, this one beginning with the appearance of a Covenant fleet above Earth itself. It's up to the same cast of characters to repel the Covenant from the planet's surface, and in the process discover why they've come....

Anyone who played Halo 2 will likely be familiar with many of the returning features and vehicles, but don't fret if this is your first introduction to the universe of Halo, because we've got you covered. In this guide, you'll find a complete bestiary of the enemies you'll encounter, an armory readout on the various weapons in the game, a listing of the vehicles you'll drive, and, of course, an exhaustive walk-through for the single-player campaign.

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Weapons

Halo wouldn't be much of a game without some guns, now would it? As with most of the other features in Halo, many of the weapons in Halo 2 are direct repeats of the weapons in Halo, with a few new twists (no scope on the pistol!) and a few new additions.

The biggest new change here is the inclusion of dual-wielding. When you have a single weapon in your hand, you can pick up another and put it into your other hand, but only when both are capable of dual-wielding. You can mix and match weapons, as well; e.g. you can have a Plasma Rifle in one hand, and a Needler in the other. When you have a weapon in each hand, you can fire each individually with either of the trigger buttons, but you're rendered incapable of throwing grenades. Dual-wielding is thus a great method for taking down tough individual targets, like Elites, but when you have to take out large groups of easier foes, like Grunts or Jackals, you'll probably be better off sticking with a one-handed weapon and grenades.

USMC (Human) Weaponry



Even when you can barely see your enemy, you'll still know when you have one in your sights due to the red reticle.

Battle Rifle

The Battle Rifle is going to be one of your primary killing weapons in Halo 2. It fires a short, three-shot burst with almost no recoil and great accuracy, and has a 2x scope, making it well-suited for zoomed firing against targets at medium range. When you can fire at enemies who aren't aware of your presence, headshots become almost trivial, and it can be something of a sniper weapon if you can line up an enemy with the relatively weak zoom. Although powerful, it won't be of much

use against Elite shields, so keep another weapon handy to deal with those foes.

M6C Pistol (dual wield)

Halo players are probably going to be inconsolable when they hear this, but it's our duty: there's no scope on the pistol. It didn't make a whole lot of sense to have one on the pistol in the first game, so this is an understandable move, but still, it's something of a sea change. In the first Halo, the pistol was a fantastic weapon due to its preternatural accuracy, even at long range, making it a combination sniper rifle / close-range blaster, but in Halo 2, it's exclusively a weapon of last resort. When dual-wielded, it can be useful against soft targets, like Grunts and Drones, but it'll be difficult to even find two of them, let alone enough ammo to keep you topped out.



In the early portions of the game, dual SMGs will be great ways to wear down Elite shields and kill them.

SMG (dual wield)

A single SMG isn't anything to write home about; although it can put a lot of lead in the air, you'll burn through a clip with a few seconds of constant fire, and won't be able to hit anything except at close range due to the massive recoil. When you can pack a pair of SMGs, though, you should be able to take down pretty much anything in your way, up to and including Elites. You will have to get up close and personal, though; to counteract the recoil, slowly press forward on your right analog stick so that your reticle stays on the target.

Sniper Rifle

You won't see the sniper rifle as often as you will the Covenant equivalent, because relatively little of the action takes place in human-controlled territory, but hey; it's a sniper rifle! Use it, love it. When you do spot one of these, you can bet that you'll have an opportunity to use it at some point in the immediate future, so they're usually worth picking up.

Although possessed of both a 5x and 10x zoom, the sniper rifle will need to be reloaded after every fourth shot. This shouldn't often be a consideration - if you have to worry about being shot while reloading, you probably shouldn't be using a sniper rifle - but it does generally mean that the beam rifle gets the slight edge in usability, when you have access to both.

Rocket Launcher

Sci-fi or no, Halo wouldn't really be an FPS without some kind of chemical explosive, and that's where the rocket launcher comes in. It's likely the rarest weapon in the game, but when you spot one, you'll almost certainly want to pick one up, as it's capable of laying waste to multiple enemies at a go, and is hands-down the best weapon to have at your disposal when you have to make a go at an enemy vehicle. (It's appearance in game levels will usually foreshadow the appearance of enemy vehicles, for precisely this reason.)

The main drawback to the RL is that it can only hold two rounds of ammo at a time, and will require a lengthy reloading animation sequence before it's ready to fire again. In addition, it can only hold eight or ten rounds of ammo at most, making it something you'll probably use in one particularly difficult fight before discarding it in favor of something less situational.

There are two things to always keep in mind when using the rocket launcher. The first is that you can lock on to some targets, including enemy turrets and vehicles. To do so, hover the reticule over your target; the launcher will automatically begin tracking it and fixing a lock. When you get the notification that a lock has been achieved, fire your missile and it'll home in and connect automatically; if you fire too soon, you'll get a dumb-fire rocket that will streak forward and likely miss, if what you're aiming at is moving. You can't lock on to most enemies, though.



When you really need to kill a whole bunch of Elites, there's nothing like the rocket launcher.

The second thing to remember is that it's devastatingly easy to blow yourself to pieces with the launcher, even when you seem to have a clear line of sight to the target. This is especially true when you're peeking out from behind cover; if the cover is on your right side, then you'll want to be well clear of it before letting loose. Your teammates are particularly bad about this, especially when they have to duck and cover, but they do get infinite ammo, so you may want to risk trading out a rocket launcher with one shot left to a teammate if you're willing to balance the chance that they might kill themselves with the chance that they'll kill numerous enemies before they go.

Shotgun

The shotgun is another weapon that doesn't appear all that often, although it does crop up a bit more than the rocket launcher. Although the weapons are fairly dissimilar, the closest analogue the shotgun has on the Covenant side of things is the energy blade: both are intended solely for use against targets at melee range, and will be useless against anything at any kind of distance. The shotgun isn't, of course, a melee weapon, but it might as well be, as the spread will be wide enough to merely wing a target if it doesn't take up more than around a quarter of your screen.

It doesn't sound promising, but the shotgun's drawbacks have to be weighed against the fact that it deals an insane amount of damage when most of its pellets connect. Most targets will drop after a single shell gets ejected, while Elites will take a pair; one to drop their shields, one to finish them off. (Brutes and Hunters will, of course, require a bit more work.) Still, though, of all the human weapons, this is the one we'd like to have at our side if Elites were charging down the hallway at us, as it can quickly overwhelm them, and is thus a good bet in most interior levels.

Just be sure to reload after each skirmish, as reloading from empty will take five or six seconds, which is essentially infinite if it takes place while enemies are in the area.

Frag Grenade

You won't get frag grenades in the same quantities as you will plasma grenades, but there's no need to cry about it; frags generally aren't as useful as plasmas will be. Don't get us wrong, we like them, but they just aren't as controllable as plasma grenades, and thus aren't capable of dealing as much damage.

The basic use here is to throw them into concentrations of enemies; half a second after the grenade hits the ground or a wall, it'll blow, sending shrapnel into all nearby enemies. Against soft targets, like Jackals, Grunts, and Drones, this will be instant death at close range, but tougher enemies will shrug off the damage unless the grenade detonates directly underneath them.

Covenant Weaponry

Plasma Pistol (dual wield)

Although marginally more useful than the human pistol (and vastly easier to find), you won't be using the plasma pistol very often. It's capable of rapid semi-automatic fire, or can be charged to deliver one massive blow. Even a fully-charged shot will rarely do more than drop an Elites shields, though, making this a weapon of last resort. Against most non-shielded targets, two simultaneous full-charge shots should be fatal, but non-shielded targets can be killed by pretty much any other weapon you come across, making any other weapon you come across preferable to these.



If you can't beat em, join em. Dual plasma rifles are great for almost any group of enemies.

Plasma Rifle (dual wield)

Ye Olde Faithful Plasma Rifle returns from Halo, and is now much improved by the inclusion of dual-wielding. In point of fact, since you can dual-wield plasma rifles, you won't often want to use one by itself. Dual-wielded plasmas are capable of ripping through most enemies, and are often going to be your best chance to kill off Elites; just hold down both trigger buttons until your weapons are on the verge of overheating, let them cool down, then repeat the process. Since you don't have to reload plasma rifles, you can go for much longer in this vein than you can with most dual-wielded weapons, allowing you to overload Elite energy shields without giving them much of a chance to run and recharge.

The two drawbacks to the plasma rifle include its proneness to overheating when used for too long a time; four seconds or so of constant fire will cause them to shut down for two seconds, during which time you won't be able to fire them. Their level of heat is displayed on the ammo bar beneath the numerical ammo readout; when the red bar extends almost all the way to the right, stop firing for a bit to let them cool down manually, which takes less time than their automatic cooling process does. Secondly, plasma rifles lose accuracy when fired for more than a few seconds at a time, forcing you to tap the triggers to gain a bit of precision when your target is at medium range. This coincides with the previous weakness, though, so if you can manage to not jam down the triggers every time you see an enemy, you should be all right.

Needler (dual wield)

The needler fires a set of small explosive needles at its target; these needles have the ability to home in, but only over small angles of incidence. If an enemy runs at a right angle to the vector of the needles, then, as many of them will, they'll avoid most of the impacts. When needles do strike their targets, though, they'll deal a small amount of impact damage, then explode for extra pain.

Against soft targets, needlers are fairly effective, but don't offer many advantages over plasma rifles or carbines, due to the fact that you'll usually have to wait for the needles to explode before your enemy dies. Due to the vague homing ability of the needles, it's also difficult to switch between targets on the fly, and almost impossible to land headshots on an enemy that isn't below you. Needles will have a hard time dropping Elite shields, as well. Needlers are thus almost useless in most combat situations.

Note the qualifiers, though; there is one particular enemy against whom needlers will be your saving grace. Brutes, since they don't possess shields, will take full damage from needlers, and since they're so resistant to most other forms of attack, you'll find nothing so handy in a Brute fight than a pair of needlers. All it takes is 15-20 needles to kill a Brute, which equates to around one-quarter of a full clip of ammo from both needlers when you're dual-wielding. You'll have to have cover to needle a Brute to death, though, and you'll also need to be fairly close to them, so get used to stealthing up to them before unloading on them while they're unsuspecting.

Carbine

The Covenant carbine is their analogue to the battle rifle, with only minor differences between the two. The most noticeable of these is the fact that the carbine sends out one round for each press of the trigger, rather than dispatching bursts like the battle rifle, but this doesn't have a huge impact on its efficacy in battle; you just have to click the trigger a few more times for each enemy. The carbine does share the battle rifle's accuracy, though, making it a poor man's sniper rifle for enemies at medium ranges. Brutes are seemingly susceptible to headshots from carbines.



Although Covenant snipers are masters of the dreaded crotch-shot, it's generally better to aim for the head when a beam rifle's in your own hands.

Beam Rifle

The beam rifle is the Covenant's version of a sniper rifle. Although it doesn't use bullets, its particle beam gets the job done just as well, and without requiring you to reload, although it is prone to overheating, plasma rifle-style, when you fire too rapidly. Since this is a sniper weapon, though, this shouldn't be a problem unless you intend to drag the beam rifle into close-range fighting, for which it's wholly unsuitable. Another problem is that you can't pick up ammo from other beam rifles, but you can switch out a partially-depleted beam rifle for one with more shots easily enough.

Brute Shot

The Brute shot is the weapon of choice for the new Brute enemies in Halo 2. For a grenade launcher, though, it's singularly unimpressive, as it features the limited ammo capacity of a rocket launcher/fuel rod gun-style weapon (four grenades per belt; 16 grenade total carrying capacity), but doesn't pack nearly the same level of fire power as those weapons, especially in terms of splash damage.

Since only Brutes drop these things, it's worth discussing the Brute shot in terms of its effects on its namesakes. A Brute can take at least two direct grenade hits before dying (on Heroic difficulty, at least), and has an outside chance to withstand four splash damage blasts without keeling over. Since you'll have to reload after every fourth round, then, you'll usually be better off resorting to a

weapon that packs a bit more ammo in it, and use grenades for your splash damage requirements. On lower difficulty levels, the Brute shot might be worth packing, but on higher difficulties, its best recommendation is that there's usually plenty of ammo to be found for it, even if each grenade doesn't do the kind of damage that you'd like.

Let's not even talk about the bayonet attachment here; if you want to go melee on an enemy, you're going to be using an energy blade or nothing at all. Brutes, especially berserk Brutes, will smack you down with extreme prejudice if you get anywhere near them. If you're stealthed, and can sneak up onto a low-level enemy, you can probably use the bayonet for a quick kill, but this is a pretty limited application of the weapon.

Energy Sword

Although you might not think it from your experiences in Halo, it can sometimes be beneficial to close to melee range in Halo 2, especially when you have an energy sword at your disposal. These things take a bit of getting used to, but when you learn the basics of shield management and taking cover, you can use a sword to get one-hit kills on almost anything you come across.



The energy sword is probably the most devastating weapon in the game, but using it without getting killed is fairly tricky.

There are two basic ways to use the energy sword; you can walk up to something and use the right trigger to whack it, which will usually be fatal against Drones, Grunts, and the like, or you can wait for the blade to lock on to your target (the reticle will turn red), and then press the right trigger. At this point, you'll cover any remaining ground between yourself and the target in the blink of an eye, and deliver a massive energy blade uppercute; the combination of the speed and

pose makes us imagine that this would look a bit like the Heisman Trophy when viewed in third person. Regardless, the locked-on blow is mindlessly devastating, and will cut through almost anything in a single blow, save for shielded Elites or undamaged Brutes; these enemies will require a lock-on blow followed by a slash to kill.

Note that the energy sword will use up "ammo" as you slice and dice enemies. A lock-on slash will require around 10% of the sword's energy supply against most targets; Flood zombies seem to require less energy to kill, though, making this a terrific weapon to use against them.



If a plasma grenade detonates near plasma grenades on the ground, they'll all go off at once. This can cause some massive slaughterage for any enemies nearby.

Plasma Grenade

Plasma grenades are differentiated from their human counterparts by their ability to stick to surfaces and, much more usefully, to enemies themselves. If you manage to throw a plasma grenade so that it hits an enemy directly, it won't explode immediately, but will instead stick to them while the fuse burns down, after which point it'll detonate and almost certainly kill whatever it's attached to, as well as severely damage anyone nearby. This is your best bet for killing difficult targets like Elites and Brutes, but beware; sometimes enemies will run straight towards you when they have a grenade stuck to them, intent on taking you out at the same time.

Fuel Rod Gun

The Covenant rocket launcher is perhaps a bit less powerful than its human analogue, but it

makes good the deficit by being able to fire more rounds without recharging (up to five), and by being able to hold more rounds in all (25 or more, although you'll rarely have this many at once). It doesn't appear to be able to lock on to targets, though.



The Sentinel beam will get a bit of lock-on when you're slightly off-target, but you shouldn't need it at the ranges in which you'll be using it.

Sentinal Beam

The Sentinal Beam isn't technically a Covenant weapon; rather, it's used by the mechanical defenders of the Halo ring's interior to ward off the Flood infestation and other intruders. Anyone who's played Quake will recognize this as being technically similar to a lightning gun; when fired, it shoots out a solid beam of energy that will cook anyone in the path. It has a decent range, and is perfectly accurate, but can't penetrate Elite shields very well and will overheat if you fire it for too long. That said, though, it's a perfect weapon to use against Sentinals themselves and Flood zombies, and you shouldn't have a problem finding them inside Halo, where all of the Sentinals drop them.

Enemies

You'll have plenty of enemies to deal with in Halo 2. Almost all of these are repeats from the first game, though, so if you played the original Halo, you should be familiar with most of these. The new kids on the block are the Covenant Brutes and Drones.

Grunts

Grunts are the most basic building block of the Covenant army. They're numerous, but extremely easy to kill, and have a habit of running for cover when their Elite commanders bite the dust. These guys usually pack plasma pistols, but will sometimes be found manning defensive turrets.



Jackals are easiest to kill if you can get above or behind their shields.

Jackals

Jackals are a step up from Grunts. They aren't any more difficult to kill than Grunts, when you can hit their meat, but they will almost always bring shields into battle which will deflect all small-arms fire, rendering them difficult to take down in straight-out combat. You have a few options here.

- Explosives: Rockets and grenades will do the job right fine.
- Turrets: You can overwhelm their shields by blasting them with turret fire, after which they'll fall quickly.
- Bypassing the Shield: If you can attack them from behind, or can snipe them through the small slot through which they fire, you can avoid hitting the shield and go straight for the body.
- Overwhelm Them: If you wail on a Jackal enough, its shields will drop, allowing you to blast it to pieces. They'll also stagger when hit, so if you have a rapid-fire weapon, try aiming for the shield, then switching to the body when the view is clear.

Jackals will also usually bring plasma pistols to fights, although they'll be more likely to charge

them up than Grunts will. Jackals are also the Covenant's chosen snipers, though, so you can expect them to wield beam rifles on occasion, but any Jackals with beam rifles will be shieldless, making them easy kills.

Drones

Drones are apparently the Covenant's fearsome janitor brigade; apparently they use their flight abilities mostly to maintain Covenant ships, but some have been retasked to combat with devastating results.

Drones are basically flying Grunts, in that they're completely unprotected from fire, incapable of taking much damage, and will usually pack plasma pistols, but it's the whole "flying" part of the equation that will make them a hassle. Since we're talking about a console FPS, it should go without saying that precision firing is difficult enough to do when an enemy is strolling about on the ground; add a whole other dimension of movement to the equation, though, and we're talking headachey badness. Luckily for you, you have a bit of auto-aim capability (assuming you didn't turn it off), which will help you direct your fire towards the targets. At close range, an SMG will chew through a Drone in a second or so; at long range, a battle rifle or carbine is a better choice. If you have a bit of patience, Drones will often attach themselves to walls or ceilings, making them much easier to hit.

Elites

For the most part, Covenant forces can be divided into two groups: Elites, and non-Elites. You'll be seeing a lot of Elites in the game, as they're the game's most distinctive enemies, and they'll almost always be a headache.

The most obvious distinction between the Elites and the other Covenant forces is the fact that they have personal shielding, much like Master Chief does. This lets them resist almost all of the damage from your attacks, at least until their shields fall. Also like Master Chief, though, if you don't press home your attack, their shields will eventually regenerate, meaning that you'll have to deal all of the damage that you did again in order to actually kill them. This necessitates a kind of bumrush approach to attacking Elites, in which you absolutely have to deal X amount of damage within Y seconds, or else the Elite will run off and hide and regenerate, which will effectively make your entire first attack worthless and a waste of ammo. In other words, you have to deal all of your damage in a short period of time, meaning that you can't leisurely strafe in and out of cover, whittling away at an Elite's health reserves.



If you let an Elite with an energy sword get this close to you, prepare to go back to your last checkpoint.

In practice, there are relatively few weapons that are worthwhile against Elites. Dual plasma rifles will be your usual recipe for success, since they're easy to find and deal a good amount of damage, and don't need to be reloaded, but you'll need to be mindful of your surroundings when using them, as they'll take a few seconds to penetrate an Elite's shields, during which your foe will have plenty of time to return fire. Rocket launchers, fuel rod guns, and turrets are also trusty standbys, when they're accessible, but they're often not. Shotguns and energy blades are similarly useful, if you happen to have one handy, but your best bet will usually be to charge in with a plasma grenade and attempt to land one directly on the Elite's body; this almost always equates to a dead Elite.

We say "almost always" because there are a few different varieties of Elites, ranging from the run-of-the-mill blue variety, which have weak shields, to the Ultra-class grays, of which there are only a few in the entire game, but which will absolutely drive you crazy on higher levels of difficulty. These latter guys can survive a terrific amount of damage; we had to use almost three full clips of carbine ammo to take one down later in the game, and close-range grenade explosions aren't likely to do much more than itch. If you can attach a plasma onto an Ultra, then good for you, but be prepared with an automatic-fire weapon in case the grenade doesn't kill the target. We're not even going to mention the flying Elites, which are pretty much frustration incarnate.

Hunters

Hunters are the most physically imposing of all of the Covenant races, albeit also the rarest; there are probably less than a dozen of these baddies throughout the entire game. These guys always

travel in pairs, and pack a modified fuel-rod weapon that acts somewhat like a Sentinel beam; the fire from these is relatively easy to avoid. What makes the Hunter unique isn't its weaponry, though. Rather, they're notable for their intense melee power (one good swing of a Hunter's arm is usually enough to kill you) and their nigh-impenetrable armor.



If you can, get behind Hunters and attach a grenade to their back.

When fought head-on, you'll find that Hunters are nearly impossible to kill. You can attach plasma grenades till the cows come home, hit them with carbine ammo, plasma rifle shots, etc., and they'll flinch it off without so much as a grunt of pain. In order to kill them, then, you have to get past their armor and aim at the portions of their bodies that are unprotected. The most accessible zone is on their back; if you can manage to shoot them in the back of the head, for example, you should find them as vulnerable to headshots as any other race. The other main zone to focus on is on their waist; this will usually be covered by their arm as they lope around, but when they roar, it will become uncovered momentarily, allowing you to blast away. (You can also wait for it to charge, then sidestep and shoot it in the back, but this is obviously somewhat dangerous.) You should see beige blood staining the floor whenever you successfully deal damage to a Hunter.

If you can take on Hunters by themselves, in a fairly open space, the battle usually devolves into a run-n-gun exercise, where you have to run around until you can get an open shot at an unprotected zone, take your shot, then continue running. Since you have to deal with these guys in pairs, try to focus on one at a time to cut their numbers in half. If possible, use a turret to deal with them, as turret fire seems to overwhelm their natural shielding and will take them down easily. Luckily, their weapon fire is easy to dodge, and they move slowly enough for you to keep out of range of their melee attacks.

Brutes

Although Elites will be your primary nemeses for much of the game, you'll have to start dealing with Brutes in large quantities towards the last third of the campaign. This is actually something of a downgrade in difficulty, in our opinion, but that's not to say that Brutes are easy to deal with; far from it.

The main reason that Brutes can be considered easier to deal with than Elites is that they don't pack energy shields. Thus, you can deal damage to them, duck under cover to let your shields recharge, then whip back out to finish the job, without having to worry about your enemy's shields doing the same. This is a good thing, too, because Brutes have more health than any other enemy in the game, save Hunters and the massive Halo Guardians.



In addition to normal weapons, Brutes are also perfectly susceptible to the old grenade-on-the-butt trick.

In a pinch, dual-wielded plasma rifles can do the job on a Brute, but will take quite a bit of time; Brutes seem to be specifically resistant to the fire from such weapons. The two most common options for killing off Brutes involve either dual-wielded needlers, which do the job quite nicely, or headshots from a carbine, which is your best bet when you spot a Brute at medium distance, but the old rocket launcher/turret/energy sword standbys are also appropriate, where applicable. If you happen to have a beam rifle, Brutes are perfectly susceptible to headshots, although you may require two headshots to kill them due to the fact that many of them wear helmets.

So far as offensive capabilities go, Brutes will usually pack either a carbine, a Brute plasma rifle (essentially an upgraded version of the blue plasma rifle that Elites wield), or a Brute shot

weapon. Brute lieutenants (the ones with red flags on their backs) are most likely to pack a Brute shot, but normal soldiers will also carry them on occasion. Although they're deadly with their weapons, Brutes are also a hair's breadth away from unleashing their berserk nature; if you manage to systematically kill a group of Brutes, then, the last member of the group will usually go insane, drop his weapon, and charge towards you and attempt to ram you with his shoulder. You can easily get killed with one or two blows from a berserk Brute, so do your best to finish them off quickly, or from a vantage point that prevents them from reaching you. These guys seem to be a bit more resistant to needler damage when they're berserk, but we might've just been imagining this.

Flood Zombies

Yes, the Flood's back, and yes, there'll be plenty of resuscitated corpses to deal with in Halo 2. They aren't quite as annoying as they were in the first Halo, though, so don't start cursing at the night sky or anything.

At its most basic level, the Flood is represented by hordes of small parasites that will scatter the floors of each level and look for corpses. If they can't find an intact corpse, they'll attempt to run into you and explode, which will only marginally damage your shields, but if they can, they'll return that corpse back to life and will start attacking you with it. Such zombies can sometimes appear with the weapons that they used in their previous life (and Elite zombies will sometimes have energy shields), and some of them will be possessed of terrific combat reflexes, and will launch at you from a long way away with a slashing attack. These are easy enough to avoid, so long as you don't let them get too close to you.



Energy blades will let you pop most zombies with a single swing.

Defensively speaking, Flood zombies are almost always weaker than they were in their previous incarnations, meaning that a human soldier zombie will take less damage to kill than a real human soldier (not that we ever shot at any of our teammates, not us, no sir). Two weapons are particularly useful against Flood zombies: Sentinel beams and energy blades. The former will be able to cut through groups of zombies without much effort, while the latter can explode enemies into mere puffs of grave dust with a single shot.

Halo Sentinals

Within the musky interior of Halo (and parts of the exterior) ancient Forerunner machines still silently patrol the corridors, wary of interlopers. One of these is the Sentinel, a levitating pod equipped with a Sentinel beam. Sentinals are extremely easy to kill, at least when you first meet them, as they don't possess much in the way of defense, but you may find it profitable to leave them alive, as they'll focus their beams on Flood zombies when such enemies are afoot. Later on, you'll come across upgraded Sentinals, with shielding and better lasers, but these are fairly rare.

Halo Guardians



Guardians are usually accompanied by Sentinals, which can make for some fierce firefights.

The most sensitive portions of Halo are patrolled by the massive Guardians. These ageless monstrosities are somewhat of a combination of a Sentinel, in that they hover around in mid-air, and Jackals, in that they have front-mounted shields that are impervious to gunfire. The solution is fairly obvious: get behind them and fire at the portions of their bodies that aren't shielded. These

guys can take a lot of damage, though, so you can expect to do a lot of hiding behind pillars unless you have a vehicle handy.

Vehicles

One of the most remarkable things about the original Halo was its incorporation of vehicles, which were seamlessly integrated into the gameplay in ways that never forced you to make use of them, but rewarded you for recognizing when it was wise (or unwise) to do so.

All of the vehicles of Halo return in Halo 2, so you should be fairly familiar with those that you encounter in the game. For the neophytes, though, here's a list of the vehicles, along with some of their attributes.

Human Vehicles

Warthog

Everyone's favorite vehicle from Halo has returned in Halo 2, and it's much the same as it was before. This rugged, four-wheel vehicle is great for speeding past trouble, and in a pinch, your passenger and turretteer can dish a beatdown on enemy forces. The Warthog isn't usually capable of taking down enemy vehicles very easily, though, unless you're manning the turret and can manage to keep a consistent aim on the target; if you have an AI soldier manning the turret, they'll usually shift targets too often to kill any vehicles that get in your way, unless it's the only target around.

One of the new additions in Halo 2 is the inclusion of a gauss cannon-equipped Warthog. The gauss cannon replaces the turret, and is intended for use primarily against vehicles. It's much more powerful against armored targets than the turret, but will only fire once a second or so, making it less effective than the turret against infantry. There are only two or three of these gauss cannon Warthogs in the entire game, though, so it's not something you'll really have to worry about.

Scorpion

Although it's ponderously slow, the Scorpion is bar none the most powerful vehicle in the game, capable of dishing out death to both enemy vehicles (with its main cannon) and enemy infantry (with its turret, fired with the left trigger). There isn't much else to say about it, really, as all of its uses are fairly straightforward; just roll on forward and blast until you can blast no more!



If your Scorpion's on fire, it's probably time to get out. If you have a teammate along, they might hop in and drive it for you!

This latter circumstance will likely arrive more quickly than you'd like, though, especially on the harder difficulty levels. In exchange for its power, the Scorpion sacrifices both speed and maneuverability, making it all but a sitting duck for enemy fire. When you spot one, use it as long as you possibly can, but be prepared to bail out as it starts to take damage. When the rear panel falls off, revealing a fire underneath, you're nearing the end of your vehicle's lifespan.

Covenant Vehicles

Ghost



Ghost drivers are awfully exposed to enemy fire. While you can take advantage of this against enemy Ghosts, the tables will turn when you try to drive one yourself.

One of the most consistently useful vehicles in the game, the Ghost is a single-pilot ground craft. It's essentially an extension of your normal battle capabilities, in that it'll let you move a bit faster, do a bit more damage, and take a few more hits than you normally would while you're driving it. Its main armament is a pair of plasma cannons, slightly more powerful than dual-wielded plasma rifles, but which cannot overheat.

In combat, your best bet is to strafe side-to-side in the Ghost while using the cannons to blast whatever's in your path; if you're keeping a distant range between yourself and your target, this movement should be enough to avoid most of the incoming fire. When you have an infantry enemy in the clear, you can attempt to ram them by using the left trigger while moving forward; this will kill most enemies, but it may merely drop an Elite's shields, thus necessitating a second pass before they die off.

Beware of hills, bumps, and dips when riding around in a Ghost, as they're prone to tipping when they hit an irregularity in ground level at any kind of speed. When this occurs, you'll be automatically ejected; you'll have to flip the Ghost back over before you can get back in.

Spectre

The Spectre is the Covenant analogue of the Warthog, with the similar driver + turret setup. Maneuverability is good, and although the Spectre is a tad slower than the Warthog, it has two slots for passengers, allowing you to load up with one more gunner than you would be able to with the human buggy. The left trigger will give you a speed burst.

Wraith

The Covenant's heavy tank is the Wraith. This is theoretically intended to be a counterpart to the Scorpion, but the vehicles are fairly dissimilar. Where the Scorpion packs a cannon and turret, the Wraith instead brings a large mortar to the table. This fires in an exaggerated arc, which makes it difficult to accurately land shots at long range; all we can say is that you'll need a lot of practice to use this baby with any kind of ease. At close range, you'll have a pair of plasma cannons that will automatically lock onto and fire at any enemies that come near you.



What can I say? I'm a baaad man.

The one "good" thing about the Wraith, at least in the single-player campaign, is that it moves quite slowly. That doesn't sound like such a boon, but since the front side of the Wraith is so heavily shielded, it's often easier to just run up to the damn things and hit the driver until he falls out than it is to actually destroy it with weapons fire. Since it moves only marginally faster than a Scorpion, this is easy enough to do, but be careful about standing in front of a Wraith, as their pilots will often try to run you down with the left-trigger boost of speed.

Banshee



If you spot a turret while flying a Banshee on a high difficulty setting, take it out or it'll shoot you down with just a few seconds of concentrated fire.

The sole vehicle in the game capable of taking to the air, the Banshee is somewhat akin to a flying Ghost, in that it possesses the same dual plasma cannons, although it does possess a bit more armor (although still not enough armor) and a fuel rod cannon. When you first encounter one in the campaign, take a couple of seconds to get used to its controls; instead of using the left trigger to accelerate, you'll need to use the left trigger to get around. Even when you're not depressing the trigger, though, you'll constantly move forward, albeit slowly, making it difficult to strafe or hold your position.

On higher difficulties, enjoy the Banshees while it lasts, because it's quite easy to get shot down while flying one, especially when you're exposed to hostile Banshees or enemy turret fire. If your Banshee starts looking like it was reclaimed from a junkyard, you'll want to land and hop out before you take too much more damage.

General Combat Tips

We'll be honest: a large part of learning to play Halo takes place as a kind of trial-by-fire, in which you'll just have to play the game to get a handle for how things work. Hopefully these following tips will give you a bit of a head start, though!

Know When To Walk Away, Know When To Run

Arguably the most unique aspect of Halo's gameplay, even including the two-gun inventory system, is the way that there isn't any health to monitor, nor medikits to pick up, or first aid stations to monitor; you don't actually have any health in Halo. Instead, what you have are

shields.

Shields work as such: when you enter combat, your shields will likely be fully-charged. As you take damage, your shields will begin to drop; big sources of damage will cause your shields to drop more rapidly than less intimidating sources. After your shields drop almost to nothingness, you'll hear a high-pitched beeping tone, warning you of impending doom; when they're completely gone, the tone will hit a lower pitch. If you can't find immediate cover at this point, you're probably dead.

Luckily for you, you can take a few hits from most weapons while unshielded without dying. Some weapons, like beam rifles, will instantaneously kill you when you're unshielded, however, while others, such as rocket launchers or plasma grenades, will probably kill you no matter whether you're shielded or not. There isn't much you can do about these latter damage sources, save for trying to avoid them altogether.

Lowered shields don't mean that you'll have to run through the rest of the level on eggshells, though; your shells will eventually recharge if you can take cover and don't get hit for a while. It'll take around five seconds for the recharging process to begin, though; if you get hit during these five seconds, you'll have to wait another five seconds for recharging to commence, and so on. If you get hit while your shields are recharging, you'll take normal damage, and they'll stop recharging. So, long story short: when you need your shields to recharge, run away from your enemies, find some cover, and wait around ten seconds for the recharging process to begin and for the shields to completely recharge before heading back into the fray.

Outfit Your Teammates

Every so often, you'll find yourself strolling through a level with a bunch of AI-controlled teammates. These guys aren't superpowered - they'll die eventually - but if you want to take full advantage of them, you should consider upgrading their weapons as you come across guns that are better than what they're packing. This is easily enough accomplished by picking up the weapon you want to give your teammate (temporarily dropping whatever you yourself were using) and then standing in front of your ally and holding X to switch weapons. In particular, you should try to upgrade from SMGs to battle rifles and from plasma rifles to carbines, but your teammates can use any weapons that you give them, from sniper rifles to rocket launchers.



If they've got room to aim, your teammates can make good use of rocket launchers and fuel rod guns.

One note about the latter weapon, though; your teammates will sometimes destroy themselves by firing a rocket launcher or fuel rod gun when they fire after not completely getting out from under cover. It's incredibly annoying (especially when you're standing next to them), so be wary of giving such weapons to teammates when you know that you'll have to duck and cover a lot, or when you're all going to be in tight quarters. In open spaces, though, your teammates can use these weapons to great effect, especially since they get infinite ammo for them. In point of fact, if you only have one round of ammo left in a launcher, it may be better to give it to a friend than to use it up yourself. (You can't give your teammates empty weapons, unfortunately.)

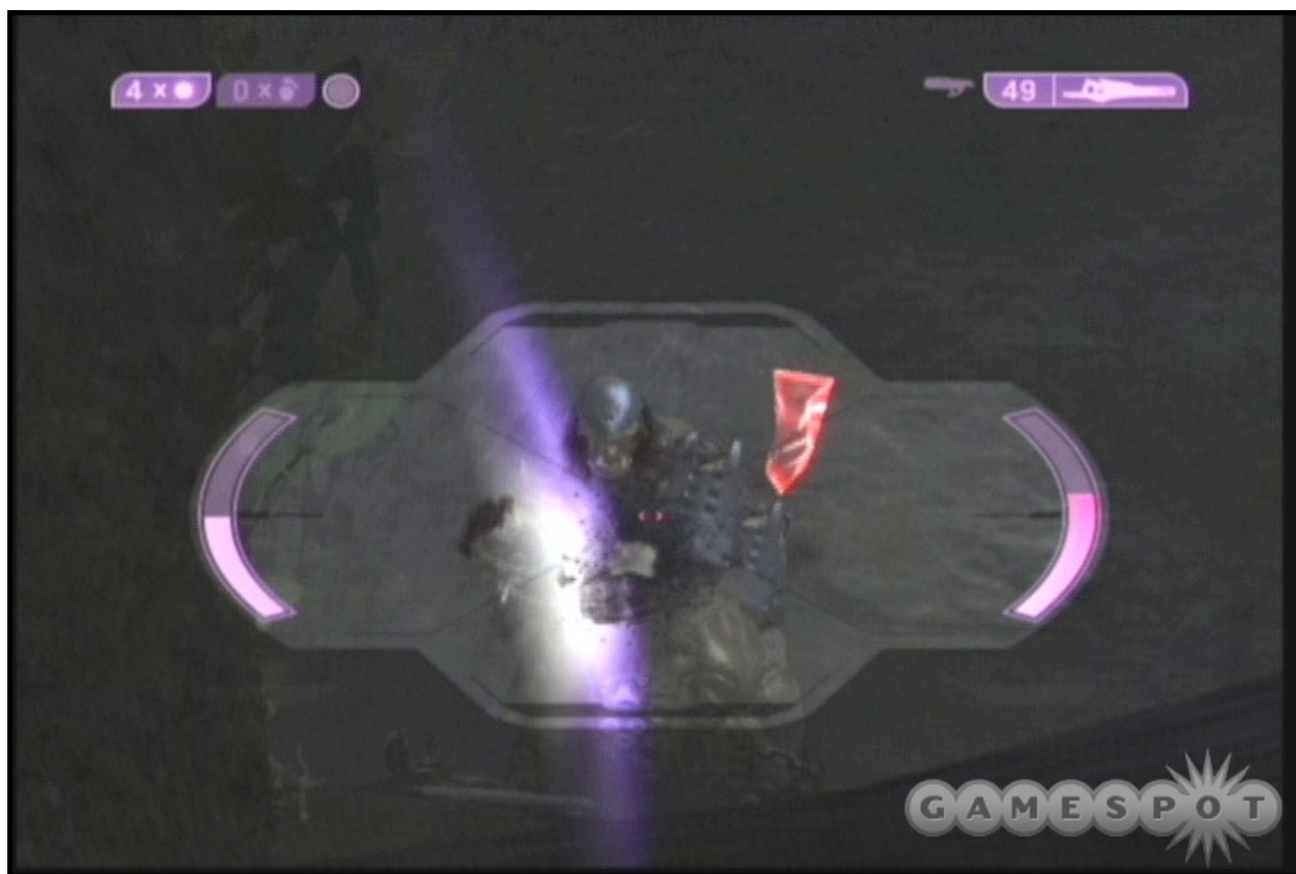
Halo: San Andreas

One of the new features in Halo 2 is your ability to take over enemy vehicles as they fly around. This is a lot more difficult to accomplish than in a Grand Theft Auto game, but the results are the same, in that you get to take control of the vehicle while simultaneously ridding yourself of at least one enemy (the driver).

To jack a vehicle, you'll need to be standing almost directly next to its driver's seat (wherever you would be able to enter it from if it was at a standstill), then hold the X button to jump aboard. You'll then be able to use melee attacks against the driver of the vehicle with the B button; hit him enough and he'll either fall out or be killed. On vehicles like the Wraith, you'll also be able to eventually throw a grenade into the driver's seat, but you should only do this if you don't intend to drive the vehicle after killing the driver. When the driver's out of his seat, you'll either automatically take control of the vehicle, or will have to jump off, then hit X again to get in and drive away.

Of course, there are a few complications to mention. One is that hopping aboard certain vehicles, especially Ghosts, can be really difficult to do, since you need to hold X for a moment. (With a Ghost, the place to jack is at a corner or turn; wait until the Ghost slows down, then hop aboard and kick the driver off.) The second is that you're not magically protected from enemy fire while you wail away on the driver. If you hop onto a Wraith, for instance, it'll take you five or six seconds to bash through the driver's hatch and kill him, during which time you'll be taking fire from any nearby enemies, which can easily kill you. Lastly, when jacking Ghosts, it's possible for the driver that you just ejected from the seat to get back up and jack you, so be careful!

On higher difficulty levels, you won't be using vehicles for as long as you would on normal or easy difficulties, if only because they don't last as long, but you can still jack vehicles, especially Wraiths, to prevent enemies from using them.



If an enemy's moving around a lot, and you have plenty of ammo, feel free to take them down with body shots, but be prepared to do around three times as much damage as you would with headshots.

Straight to the Dome

Like any good modern FPS game, it's worth mentioning that Halo 2 has a damage model that includes increased damage for headshots, meaning that if you shoot something in the head, it's unlikely to get back up any time soon. Many enemies, especially Brutes, are much easier to kill when you possess a decent ability to aim at their heads.

This is, of course, much easier to accomplish when you possess an accurate weapon, and when your enemy is standing still. Suitable weapons are usually limited to the carbine, the battle rifle, and the beam or sniper rifles; everything else either has too much spread or is simply too inaccurate to get consistent headshots. (Except at very close ranges, where anything can happen.)

When you possess one of these, and are able to zoom in on your opponent's head, all it should take are one or two shots to finish the beast off, with more perhaps required for Elites and other shielded enemies.

Walk-through

Two notes here. The first is that, so far as such a thing is possible, this is a spoiler-free walk-through; we've done our best to avoid discussion of cutscene events or plot details. Secondly, we based most of this on a playthrough of the game on the Heroic difficulty. Thus, if you're playing on Normal, you'll probably find some of the gameplay tips a bit too cautious; feel free to blast through the game at full speed ahead. If you're having trouble with a specific part of the game, though, hopefully our techniques will get you through!

Cairo Station

Before you can head into battle, you'll need to get geared out. After you regain control of Master Chief, follow the soldiers down the stairs and step towards the gunracks on the wall to pick up an SMG and a Battle Rifle. Since you don't have any grenades, you might as well go ahead and dual-wield something; the only weapon that makes any sense to dual-wield here is the SMG, so flip over to it and grab another one from the rack by holding down the Y button when prompted.

Home Field Advantage

Repel the Covenant Boarders

Now that you're loaded out, you'll have to head towards a nearby bulkhead, so follow Sarge; he knows where to go. The Covenant will begin to cut through the door, forcing you to repel a few waves of them, but with your dual-wielded SMGs, and the suppressing fire of your teammates, you shouldn't have any problem taking them out. If your shielding runs low, you can retreat behind the obstacles on either side of the door and wait for it to recharge.

When the Covenant retreats, or when you notice your fellow soldiers moving through the door, follow them and take a left. Your enemies are fortified to the right, but they'll have to split their attention between you and a soldier with a turret beyond their position, so switch over to your Battle Rifle, zoom in, and start plugging away at the Elites. When they're dead, head past the turret gunner to reach a room with another turret in it; hop in and start blasting away at the aliens below. You don't have to do this, of course, but you'll have an easier time of it later on if you take advantage of the fire superiority that the turret affords you.

After breaking off from the turret, head on to reach another set of steps. There's another Elite here, and a tough bastard, at that. You can take him down with your dual SMGs at close range, but a better idea might be to try and flush him downstairs and out into the hallway at its bottom, where a soldier will likely plug him.

The corridor beyond here will be infiltrated by more Elites and Grunts as you walk down it; they'll come from doors on either side of the end of the corridor, so walk along until you trigger the

influx, then take cover and switch over to your Battle Rifle to plug them from a distance while your teammates take the brunt of the fire.



You'll find plenty of frag grenades on the upper level here, so use them!

The next room that you'll encounter is a docking bay, which the Covenant have breached with one of their boarders. If you want to stay alive here, stay on the upper platform, ditch your dual-wielded weapon, if you have one, pick up as many grenades as you can carry, and start chucking them at the boarders. You should have a dozen or so plasma grenades at your disposal, so go crazy! You'll have to kill off two or three waves of baddies before you can move on, so if anyone starts hiding behind a crate, use your Battle Rifle to pick them off.

Eventually soldier nearby will start talking about the Malta; look out the window to witness that battle station's unfortunate fate. As soon as it's destroyed, more Covenant will flood into the bay from an adjacent room; you can still take them down from above, so grab more grenades and use the wings of the Marine Corps landing craft as a perch from which to fire.

After proceeding through the doorway, you'll come to another landing bay, but one in which the Covenant has heavily fortified themselves. You can take out the turret gunners with your Battle Rifle, but you'll need to proceed with caution from there, as there are plenty more targets on the far side of the room. If you want to gain a little perspective on the situation, you can use the doorway on the right side of the room to reach the upper level; on harder difficulties, though, you might find it a bit easier to reach the recessed stairwell near the Covenant shift that heads downwards to a locked door, using it to as a redoubt from which to dart in and out of the battle. If you move in and out, the Covenant will have to continually refocus their efforts and shift from your teammates to you, letting you divide and conquer.

Priority Shift

Find the Covenant Bomb

Now that you know why the Covenant was boarding your station, you have to locate and deactivate the bomb that they've brought along with them. You can head out through the doors marked Mac Storage at the bottom of the stairs here, but before you do, pick off the enemies below with help from your soldier friends.



Watch for an invisible Elite as you descend into this stairwell.

When you descend the stairs, you can pick up another dual-SMG combo from the weapons rack in the middle of the room, which will come in handy, because two more Elites will appear from either of the far doors as you approach them. One is stealthed, so watch for the telltale Predator-esque waviness and bust a cap. From there, head up the stairs and drop the two Elites after they kill your friend. You shouldn't have a problem with these guys, so long as you stay on the stairs and retreat belowdecks if you need to recharge your shields. Take the respite offered by this room to switch out your guns, if you wish; there's a Battle Rifle on one of the tables, and the soldier who was killed dropped a Shotgun.

In the Commons Blue, the next room over, you'll have to maneuver your way through the field of fire of multiple turrets. If you can bust the Unggoys across the way, then dash across without getting killed, you should be able to eliminate the first two turret stations with a combination of Shotgun and Battle Rifle fire. This will let you fall back to the end of the long corridor and pick off the distant turret stations with the latter weapon, which should clear your approach. You'll then have to fight through a few more clusters of Covenant before you reach Tramstation B-01, where you'll meet up with more soldiers, including the Sarge. Fight with them for a bit, then head

through the pressure chamber at the end of the hall for a brief excursion into space.

Authorized Personnel Only

As soon as you hit the checkpoint here, you'll have two Elites bust through the door, so use grenades or a weapon to bust them down. There are two more Elites waiting for you outside, but they can be really tough to hit due to the way they fly around, so you might want to just run for the far door and head through the airlock there, rather than bother to engage them.



At long range, a battle rifle is the best way to deal with Drones, but keep an SMG handy in case they close in.

Through said airlock, you'll have to deal with an influx of Drones. These guys are supremely annoying, so you'll want to grab as much cover as possible and use your Battle Rifle to take them down from a distance, if at all possible. There's an SMG near the door, so if you're having trouble, grab that and try to lure them towards you; one of the good things about Drones is that they can't take a beating, so a second or so of concentrated SMG fire will usually drop them.

After all the Drones are dead, you won't have much time to recuperate, as the elevator down below will begin rising, and it brings with it a load of a couple of Elites and numerous Grunts. Do your best to pick them off as the elevator rises; when it stops, you should have plenty of room to maneuver. After that battle's over, look around for extra ammo and grenades before descending on the elevator yourself.

When you reach the bottom of the elevator, use the Battle Rifle there to take down the flying Elites outside, then hop across the ever-shifting landscape until you reach another airlock.

Return to Sender

Now that you've located the bomb, you'll have to kill off the Elites that guard it. There are three or four of them, though, so you'll need to play it smooth. If you manage to get into the room without alerting the Elites, try to sneak up along the right-hand wall until you're within easy shot of the one closest to you, then stick an Energy Grenade onto it and watch the fun. The other three will, of course, be alerted to your presence, so retreat back to the far end of the room and outfit yourself with dual SMGs, and restock your Battle Rifle ammo. You should have plenty of places to hide in the room, so lure them out one by one and off them with your

The Outskirts

They're Gonna Regret That, Too

Defend The Marines Until Help Arrives

Not much to say about the beginning of this level. Essentially, you're boxed into a small portion of the cityscape and beset on all sides by Covenant forces (as well as the inequities of the selfish and the tyranny of evil men, of course). Luckily for you, you have a bit of help along, in the form of Sarge and a sniper. The sniper is apparently unkillable, or perhaps he just avoids trouble by staying atop the building here, but she'll be a big help to you, because there are quite a few enemy snipers in the surrounding buildings. These guys can't instakill you if you're at full shields, but they will instantly zap away your entire shield reservoir, forcing you to beat a hasty retreat to the interior of the building until it recharges.

After clearing the building, you should make your way to the turret on the second floor landing and use it as a base of operations. There's a Battle Rifle nearby; if you already have a Battle Rifle, you can walk over this one for nearly unlimited ammo. The turret's going to be your primary form of communication with the Covenant forces, though. However, the first few waves (usually Grunts and Elites) will come from the left, where the turret can't fire, so use your SMGs or Battle Rifle to drop them before dealing with the waves from the right, of which there are more than a few. The most annoying will be the Drones, but your turret has enough spread to pick them out of the air. The turret will come in incredibly handy against the Jackals that occasionally walk into the courtyard, though, as it punches right through their shielding.

Eventually a Covenant dropship will appear and blast you from above; its goal isn't to kill you, though (although that's obviously a nice side effect for them), but rather to cover the descent of more troops into the courtyard. As soon as the dropship takes off, return to the turret and use it to blast the Grunts, if you can.



If you don't use the turret on the Hunters, they'll be next to impossible to kill.

After all of the waves have come and gone, you'll hear the Sarge requesting that someone place a satchel on a pair of reinforced doors in the courtyard. When you hear this, make a beeline for the turret, if you're not already there, as a pair of Hunters will come smashing through shortly, and you don't have anything in your arsenal that will let you easily kill them. The turret will make short work of them, though; just ignore their fire if at all feasible, and just blast away until they both fall down.

Rendezvous With the Pelican

This is easily accomplished; just run through the doorway that the Hunters blasted, and the Pelican will appear. Sarge will hop aboard, leaving you with a few grunts as your only company. Before you hit this point, though, you might want to grab Sarge's sniper rifle....

Find the Marines From the Second Downed Pelican

Around the corner from the first Pelican, you'll come to a long corridor overwatched by multiple enemy snipers. If you grabbed a sniper rifle, you can use it to pick them off from long range; if all you have is a battle rifle, then you're probably going to have to run from cover to cover until you get into a position to return fire. (You might check to see if any of the Jackals near the Pelican dropped a Beam Rifle, which is basically a Covenant sniper weapon.) On Heroic or Legendary difficulty, this is going to be a happy fun death march for you, as a couple of stealthed Elites will also eventually appear. Your teammates are likely not long for this world, so let them go on ahead, and use whatever weapons you can to pick off the Elites and the snipers, but be watchful for Drones, who'll complicate matters by flying around overhead and zapping you while you try to zoom in your weapon. Fun!



If you start getting shot, and can't tell from where, look up; a Drone is likely hovering around.

At the very least, you'll have a good idea how capable you're going to be of playing on your chosen difficulty when you hit this area. When you've cleared everything out, head down to the far end of the corridor to hit the checkpoint, then gradually peek into the corridor on your right to check for yet more snipers. There are at least three of them here, including one that may spawn in behind you, so if you don't have a beam or sniper rifle, check the burning crater nearby. A fallen soldier here has an almost-full sniper rifle for your distance-killing pleasure.

As you work your way through the buildings, you'll have to deal with quite a few Grunts and Elites, including a sniper or two that'll appear on the rooftops. Deal with them as you see fit; the tight corridors lend themselves well to grenades or dual SMGs/Plasma Rifles, but your mileage may vary.

Depending on how thoroughly you killed off the baddies, you may have to deal with another firefight in front of the hotel. There may or may not be a gray Elite here; if there is, then you may be screwed, especially on higher levels. The gray variants seem to have a lot more shielding than any other color, but you may be able to take him on with an energy sword, if any of the earlier Elites dropped one. He can even survive a stickied plasma grenade! Regardless, you'll have to do your best to take him out, if indeed he appears.

Inside the hotel, you'll come across the survivors of the crashed Pelican, who'll want to escort you through the hotel itself. As per usual, your teammates are expendable, so run ahead into the hallway (don't forget you have a flashlight on your white button) to spawn the Covenant forces, then pull back a bit and let the troops do the heavy lifting.

A Day At The Beach

Destroy the Covenant on the Shoreline



If your teammates are driving, you won't have any way to avoid dropship cannon fire; you might want to try shooting off the cannons with your turret.

After you clear the hotel, you'll have to dispatch more Covenant that fall from a dropship, so clear them out. After you do so, a welcome gift arrives, in the form of a Warthog. Yay! Hop on into the driver's seat if you wish to drive; if not, you can hop into the turret position and blast away while one of your teammates drives. This latter option is probably preferable, as you can pick targets a bit better than your teammates will be able to, while they can drive passably well, with the exception of some annoying pauses.

You have two groups of Covenant to destroy here. The first consists of a couple of small encampments, each with Grunts and Elites, as well as a Ghost that'll zip around. The annoying part about this fight is the fact that an apparently indestructible Covenant dropship will appear as you're wrapping up your destruction of the ground forces and drop out two or three more Ghosts, while it itself lays down a base of turret fire on you. What's even more annoying is that it just hovers off the shore and continues to blast away while you try to deal with the Ghosts, but after all the Ghosts are dead, it'll back off a bit.

After penetrating the fortifications and making it to the second section of beach, hop into the driver's seat and blast towards the large tunnel behind the second set of Covenant fortifications. The dropship will assume a gunning position above the fortifications, which are well-manned by Covenant forces, so you'll have a difficult time breaking through, but just keep in mind that your

goal is to survive, not blast everything that moves. In point of fact, you shouldn't waste your time with pointless battles here; just drive the Warthog as close to the tunnel as you can get it, then jump out and head towards the Ghost that's parked inside.

Speed Zone Ahead

Take The Highway Tunnel To The Bridge

The Ghost here is a maneuverable, if somewhat slow vehicle, and it has rapid-fire lasers with infinite ammo, which should add up to a lot of fun for you. What's better is that a Warthog with a turreteer will follow you into the tunnel, allowing you to hang back and fire at targets while the peons sacrifice their lives for you. This is precisely what you should do, in fact; let the Warthog go on ahead and take all the fire, while you sit back and blast anything that moves. The Ghost is fairly durable, but won't last forever, so if you can avoid fire now, you'll be able to hold onto it a bit longer than normal.



If you can catch up to the Shadows, they should be easy to kill.

Of course, the Warthog isn't exactly indestructible, either, so it'll blow up eventually. Keep fighting on, though, and you'll eventually see another one join the party; this is congruous to the appearance of large Covenant transports in the tunnel. The Warthog won't stick near you if you fall back; it'll instead choose to move on down the tunnel, where it'll engage the troop transports on its own. If you don't want to deal with any of these battles, or if your Ghost is on its last legs, just hang well back and watch the action as it unfolds.

Eventually, you'll come to a staging area that the Covenant is using to push out onto the bridge beyond. Included here are three Ghosts, possibly more if the transports made it here alive. These

guys have very predictable movement patterns, so they're not difficult individually, but in groups they can be annoyingly tough to bring down. With any luck, you'll still have your own Ghost at this point; if so, then killing them off should be a simple matter of sweeping from side to side while they charge in and blasting them as they approach. If one turns tail and runs, let it go and concentrate on another target, but try to keep them all on one side of you. If worst comes to worst, you can try to board one of their Ghosts while they're in it, but it's not quite as easy as certain gameplay movies might've led you to believe. They really have to be either standing still or turning, as you have to hold down X for a second or so in order to pull it off.

If you're forced onto your feet, though, try to do your best with whatever weapons you have available to you. Dual-wielded plasma rifles are acceptable weapons to use against Ghosts, but you'll have to let them get pretty close. If you want to run for it, you can try to break through and head for the ramp leading out of the tunnel; when you start moving up it, you'll launch into the next chapter.

Metropolis

Ladies Like Grinding Treads

Crush Covenant Resistance on the Bridge

Ah, the Scorpion; there's nothing quite like a treaded tank when you just have to squash a few Covenant into the ground. It's a mighty beast, but quite easy to control, albeit a bit slower than the Warthog. You have unlimited turret and cannon shells, so hold down the turret as you proceed, but save the cannon until you line up your target. It takes a second to reload, so you don't want to fire unless you're relatively sure you're going to hit something. Luckily, there isn't much arc to the shell, so you won't have to adjust your aim upwards very much, even for very distant targets.

Most of your traverse across the bridge will see you dealing with Ghost after Ghost, but they shouldn't be too much of a problem for you; a single cannon shell will usually send them flying. Unfortunately, though, you can't just take your sweet time and let them come to you, as a Wraith near the top of the bridge's arc (you'd think they'd have learned how to make a bridge that runs straight in the year 24whatever) will launch mortar shells at you as you approach. You'll thus have to keep heading forward to avoid the significant splash damage of the mortars; try not to let any Ghosts get behind you, then.



On Heroic difficulty or higher, this will probably spell the beginning of the end for your tank.

The approach to the far side of the bridge is going to be a huge pain in the ass, especially on Heroic or Legendary difficulties. As you proceed past the wreck of the first Wraith, you'll have a pair of Banshees appear behind you, as well as another of the apparently indestructible landing craft that'll take potshots at you as you roll on. In addition to these, more Ghosts will appear from the far side of the bridge and begin approaching you, while more Banshees and Wraiths will spawn in when you get to the toll counters on the far side of the bridge. If you're on normal difficulty or lower, the Scorpion you have be able to survive all of this and get you into the tunnel on the far side of the tolls, but on Heroic or higher, you're likely to get lambasted before you make it very far.

Thus, on the higher difficulties, you're best served by...turning around and running! Well, we jest, but you may have noticed a Warthog near where you picked up the Scorpion. If you return to the Warthog and use that, you should be able to speed past all of the enemy vehicles and get down into the tunnel beyond without dying. Sometimes discretion really is the better part of valor!

Make Your Way to the Surface

Inside the tunnel, you'll meet up with more soldiers, and will have to bust your way through a few Covenant fortifications, made up of overturned cars and the like. One of the soldiers will offer you her shotgun, and you'll probably want to take it; depending on the difficulty level, you can likely hop down into the maze of cars and start boomsticking the Elites there to bits. Since the shottie is so devastating at close range, you shouldn't take too much damage doing this. At the far end of the cars is another large barrier, with a few Elites on a ledge off to one side; encourage them to take a stroll by chucking grenades up there, then clean them out when they hit the ground, with the help of your friends. Afterwards, you can bypass the fortification to find a tunnel leading back

up topside.

This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both of Us

Regroup with Marine Forces in the City Center

Here's where things get a little complicated. When you get through the tunnel, you'll be in a large park, in which numerous Elites and Grunts, including a few snipers, have made a little nest. Don't worry about the bigass Covenant wrecking machine that's slowly leaving the area; you're not going to be able to dent it. But so the ground troops have taken control over a loose network of platforms and will snipe away at you as you enter the park; they also have a couple of plasma turrets set up, but you're unlikely to get hit by these unless you bum rush the platforms, which is an unwise idea. On your side of the equation, you have a few troops that will attempt to assault the platforms on their own as soon as you arrive, as well as a Warthog that's running around on the surface of the park below.



Even your battle rifle will help you clear out some of the enemies here.

You have two main options here: you can either attempt to hang back and use a sniper rifle (which you can steal from your sniper teammate) or a beam rifle (which you will probably be able to find in the fortifications you just bypassed in the tunnel, or on the first sniper you come across near the entrance to the park) to snipe away at the foot soldiers on the platforms; or you can hop down to the lower level of the park and wait for the Warthog to come around and man its turret. The former option is the safest, the latter the riskiest (albeit a bit more fun).

If you proceed on foot, go slowly and cautiously, switching out for a beam rifle when you run out of ammo. Your ultimate goal here is to get to the bottommost platform, which has the plasma

turrets on it, as they'll be the easiest way for you to take out the enemy Ghosts that will be circling below you. They'll likely harrass the Warthog as it passes, letting you fire away without taking much damage. If you mount the Warthog, though, you'll find that it has a Gauss Cannon on its rear, which won't be very effective against the foot soldiers, but will help you bust through the Ghosts that will soon begin harrying your friends. Regardless, you'll probably want to clear the entire room before moving on.

The next small chamber features a couple of snipers, a few more Ghosts, and a Wraith. Needless to say, this is going to be a hard nut to crack. If your Warthog is in any kind of condition to run, use its turret to blast at the Wraith first, as it's the most annoying part of this equation. If you manage to bash up one of the Ghosts, you can try to mount it and blast through the corridor beyond the Wraith, as you don't really need to kill everything here, just move on. In exceedingly dire straights, you can try to jack the Wraith itself, and although these vehicles are much easier to take over than the Ghosts, you'll have to deal with its turrets as you approach and the sniper fire as you bash open the pilot's chamber. So that'll be tough, obviously!

Your best bet will usually be to just blast past all of the enemies towards the waterfall sculpture beyond, but be aware that any Ghosts left flying will pursue you. You may be able to take advantage of this by waiting until they're forced to turn by the waterfall, then jacking them as they slow down. If you can grab control of a Ghost, it'll be a big hand in the fight coming up....



If all you're interested in is taking out the Wraiths, feel free to use grenades to blast them after opening the driver's hatch.

After you clear the next street area of any Ghosts (with the help of a fully-manned Warthog, which you can commandeer if you wish), you'll have to head up and around the corner to blast away at a few Wraiths and a couple of snipers. Now, if you can get close to a Wraith while the Warthog is

distracting the others, you can fairly easily jack it by hitting X to jump aboard, then repeatedly using your melee attack until the driver is dead. After that, all you need to do is hop aboard, but be aware that the Wraith is not a very maneuverable vehicle. If you do get into one, you should probably retreat a ways and use the mortar at long distance, especially if both of the other Wraiths are still active. You'll also have to deal with a dropship that will deliver more Ghosts into the area, so be prepared!

After all of the enemies here are dead, more Marines drop in. They would've come in handy two minutes previously, but hey. Make your way up the steps of the building to meet up with Sergeant Banks. Note the panoply of weapons on display in the hands of the Marines; feel free to outfit yourself with whatever they're carrying.

Nice Of You To Drop In

Board And Destroy The Scarab

After you meet up with the Marines, you'll probably notice a Scarab coming your way. You can't hurt it - yet - but you can board it! Follow the set of stairways that lead up to a walkway overlooking a canal, then load up with as much ammo as you can fit, and switch out one of your weapons for a rocket launcher. Although there are plenty of walkways that will let you get above the Scarab, don't bother boarding it until it comes to a complete stop at the end of the walkway.



After using a few rocket rounds on the Elites aboard the Scarab, use the turret to finish them off.

When that occurs, it'll get hit with a few rockets from one of your dropships; take this opportunity to use a couple of rounds from your own rocket launcher, as well as a couple of grenades, to

utterly destroy the Elites on the Scarab's bridge. When you've sufficiently weakened them up, use the turret to finish off any stragglers. Only when the coast is clear should you jump across to the Scarab; before you do, though, switch out one of your weapons for a shotgun, and make sure you get all of the frag grenades near the turret. You'll probably want to keep your rocket launcher, assuming you have at least a couple rounds left for it.

The one thing you have on your side as you descend into the belly of the Scarab is the element of surprise. After you head down the ramp, you're going to be in a small room with a Grunt and a few Elites, one of which is apparently ultra-class, according to Cortana. All we know is that the bastard's tough, so if possible, hang a left at the bottom of the ramp and pop off two rockets into the room as quickly as possible. If you hit him dead on, he may die from this; if not, chuck in all of your grenades and then retreat up to the top of the ramp before switching over to your shotgun. When the ultra pursues you, blast him until he goes down.

After you kill off the remaining Elites, all you need to do to clear the level is walk towards the instrumentation panels nearby. Soon enough, the city will go Akira, and you'll have to follow the Prophet's ship into the aether.

The Arbiter

A Whisper In The Storm

Locate the Heretic Leader

After making landfall, follow your squad down to the doorways leading into the Heretic base. You'll be sent in first, so activate your stealth ability with the white button before using the energy blade to off the Elite that's patrolling nearby; you should be able to kill him in two blows. Your stealth only lasts for a few seconds, though, so retreat back to the doorway before the Grunts here kill you, and let your squad move in and start working on the rest of the nearby enemies. One of the Elites on the platform above holds a Covenant carbine, which is somewhat analogous to a battle rifle, so you'll probably want to switch your plasma rifle out for it.

The second half of the room features more Elites and Grunts; you can kill off the Grunts fairly easily, but you may want to use the stealth and energy blade combo to cut through the Elites. At the very least, there's plenty of cover afforded to you by all of the blocks and small structures between the conveyor belts.

At the bottom of the conveyor belts, move gingerly across the small paths - a fall here means death - and clear out the small area beyond to reach an elevator. You'll see radar blips as you head down, so when you're free of the restrictive glass, immediately stealth, then walk behind the elevator pillar to trigger the checkpoint. At this point, you'll have to deal with an Elite and a couple of what appear to be ship-building Sentinals. The Sentinals are easy enough to take out, but you'll need to get the Elite first, so stealth out, then walk up to him and plant a grenade on his ass. He probably won't even know it's on him until it explodes, which will leave you free to take out the Sentinals. Said Sentinals have powerful lasers, but can only take a few hits from a carbine; go into stealth mode if you want to target them safely.



The Sentinel beams are fantastic weapons, albeit not very useful against Elites.

When the Sentinals are dead, you can lift Sentinel beams from them, if you wish. Regardless of your weapon loadout, you'll have to proceed to the far end of the hangar and open the hangar doors via one of the switches in order to let the other Covenant in. Unfortunately, they'll soon be blasted to smithereens by an influx of Heretic forces, but you'll prevail, because it's either that or death. Clear out everyone around the hangar before moving on through the doors that've opened up underneath the docked ship. You can check around for more weapons; you may be able to find both a fuel rod gun and another energy sword.

If you do find the energy sword, you'll find it useful against the elites in the hallway beneath the hangar. If you choose another array of weapons, you may have a harder time dealing with them, but deal you must. Down below, you'll have another grouping of Grunts and Elites to blast through, with a few of them packing Sentinel beams. You may have an easier time getting through if you stick to the upper level of the room and throw grenades at the largest concentration of forces.

Another series of downward-leading corridors follows this battle, eventually leading to another door; go figure that one. Enemies tend to clump up behind this door, so use your stealth ability to attach grenades to them before ducking back behind cover. Fresh troops will arrive to accompany you, so, as usual, let them take the lead while you use your energy sword to get stealth kills on any Elites that pop up into your path.

Eventually, you'll come to another hangar bay with a few Banshees in it. An Elite here will sic a number of Grunts on you while he motors off to protect the Oracle, whatever that is. (So long as Keanu Reeves doesn't make an appearance, we'll go with the flow here.) Kill off everything that moves (there'll be a few waves), then make your way out to the Banshees and take off.

To The Hunt

Pursue the Heretic Leader



If you want to survive, stay back and let the dropship draw most of the enemy fire while you carefully pick and choose your targets.

Not much to say here, except "Have fun!" There's nothing in Halo quite as fun as flying a Banshee around, we find, especially when you have an indestructible dropship accompanying you and drawing almost all the enemy fire.

Follow the dropship along, taking out the turret stations and any airborne enemies that you encounter. Keep an eye out for grounded Banshees that you can switch to if yours becomes damaged. After five to ten minutes of aerial combat, you'll eventually find the Heretic leader's Banshee parked at a ground station, so clear it of all enemies before dropping down to end the level.

Oracle

Juggernaut

Escape the Infested Labs

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water...the Flood arrives. Everybody's least favorite FPS enemy is back, but for your first encounter, at least, you have the benefit of

numerous teammates; let them handle the small bits of the Flood while you take out any reanimated corpses. Soon enough, though, you'll be sent ahead to proceed, with two Elites by your side.

The same basic pattern of combat applies while you're on the elevator platform; let the Elites do the heavy lifting while you keep the Flood corpses off of them, preferably with Sentinel beams, which shouldn't be too hard to find due to all the Sentinels that will flit about. If your Elites happen to die, which they eventually will, you can hide underneath the walkways and let the Sentinels take out any Flood corpses which might be milling around. The Sentinels are hostile to you as well, of course, but hey, an enemy of my enemy is my friend, at least until I have to blast my friend into little itty-bitty pieces and take its weapon.



Be careful of drawing the attention of the Flood in this room until you're set up to kill all of them.

Eventually you'll reach the bottom of the elevator; you'll know you're there when you see the door. Said door leads to the labs, where you'll have to survive through another gauntlet of Flood corpses and pods. After you break through the glass to drop into the lab, though, you can stealth yourself and make your way around to the turrets on the far end of the room. If you can stealth and grab one of these quickly, you should be able to kill off quite a few of the corpses before having to disengage; if you still have an energy blade, you can use it to make short work of any remaining corpses. (And if you don't have one, there should be a fully-charged sword on one of the small pedestals in the room.)

After a few waves of baddies, Heretic forces will burst through the doors near the turrets and start wasting the Flood, so hang back on the other end of the room and let them clear out what, from Master Chief's point of view at least, are the enemy of your enemy's enemies, then stealth and

sword any Elites that remain standing before moving on.

Find the Heretic Leader

After heading through the airlock, you'll be reinforced with more troops, and will have your mission reprioritized. The Flood has spread throughout the station, and your task - to find and kill the Heretic leader - has become more urgent. Why can't the Covenant just blow away the entire station, or pull their troops out and wait for the Flood to kill everything aboard, presumably including the Heretic leader? It's a mystery to us.

Regardless, your enemies are now exclusively Heretic, including numerous Elites and Grunts. Fight your way up the ramps to the door on the far side of the station (and watch for Sentinals). Inside the large room within, more Sentinals will be gutting Flood corpses; let them finish their work, then destroy the Sentinals themselves to trigger a cutscene.

Hey, Watch This!

Cut the Three Cables Holding Up the Station



Slice these cables to send the station crashing away. To where? Dunno, but it sure takes a while to get there.

Start walking up the ramps in the large room, ignoring the fighting betwixt Flood and Sentinals as best you can. You'll come to an elevator at the top; ride it up to the station's moorings. You'll need to use your energy sword to cut the three cables in this room. There's another big fight between Sentinals and the Flood here, though, so when you reach the top of the elevator, immediately stealth yourself, and you should be able to get up one of the ramps without being detected. From

there, you can get behind the first cable (they can be cut in any order) and slash at it until it detaches, then repeat the process on the other two cables. Just ignore any incoming fire; if a Flood corpse gets too close to you, just slash it to death and move on.

Pursue the Heretic Leader Back to the Hangar

After all three cables have been severed, wait a moment until the station goes into freefall, then walk back down to the elevator. Don't jump around, as the game may detect this as a falling-damage death, which is no fun! After you reach the large room at the bottom of the elevator, hop down to the bottom, again ignoring any combat that's going on, then stealth before entering the Heretic leader's little chamber. Two Elites and a pair of Grunts await you, so stick a grenade on one of the Elites, then back out of the chamber while they go crazy. If you want, you can melee your way through the remaining troops with your energy blade. (So, despite the fact that the Heretic leader had an impenetrable door between you and he, and an elevator to take him far away from the combat above, he decides to open said impenetrable door and let you follow him? Huh?)

You'll find what appears to be the station's energy reactor at the bottom of the elevator. You can refit your weaponry from that of the corpses near the door; afterward, do the familiar stealth-and-grenade bit on the Elites near the far exit before moving on to the Banshee platform outside and giving chase to the head Heretic. All you have to do in the Banshee segment of the level is fly to the checkpoint indicated on your HUD, so use the left trigger to blast your way over there, ignoring any other Heretic craft in the area.

Dead or Alive...Actually, Just Dead

In a gameplay trope that everyone will fondly remember from Halo, you're now going to have to backtrack from the hangar through numerous corridors that you've already fought through. As you might expect, there's more combat going on betwixt Flood and Covenant and Heretic, which you should be able to use to your advantage as you claw your way back to the Spectre-class ship that the Heretic leader is moving towards.

Kill the Heretic Leader

Eventually, you'll catch up to him, and yeah, yeah, appearance by someone you thought was surely dead, etc. The Leader spawns in two holographic replicants of himself, which can deal full damage, so you're essentially dealing with three simultaneous flying Plasma Rifle dual-wielding Elites. Fun.

You stand zero chance of winning this battle if you attempt to fight straight on; you'll get sliced to razor thin shreds before you can even return fire. What you have to do, then, is use the cover given to you. You remember all those meaningless crates that were being moved around pointlessly in rooms like this earlier? Well, the small corridors they were cycling into are still here, even though the crates themselves are no longer moving. These chambers are going to be your best friend, and your only real protection against the Ginsu Knife-like attacks of the Elites in the main room.



If you can stick grenades onto the flying Elites, you'll eventually manage to kill the correct one.

Your strategy? Well, it'll take a whole lot of reloading to accomplish, but essentially what you want to do is hide in a corridor, wait for the radar blips to disappear, then stealth yourself and move outside to get a look around. If there's an Elite near your position, get close enough to peg him with a grenade, then simultaneously fire at him with whatever weapon you have (a Sentinel beam is ideal). When the grenade goes off, that should be one bogey down, and you can retreat back into the corridor to recharge your shields and wait for the enemies to stop moving again. If you hit a hologram, it'll fritz out, but when you get the leader, he'll fall to the floor. If you do happen to get a hologram first, and want to save your game, stealth and move towards the large hangar door; there's a checkpoint that you'll hit as you move towards it, but make sure you're not getting fired on when you reach it. If you need more grenades, check near the ramps leading up to the second floor here.

Delta Halo

Helljumpers

Clear the Landing Zone for the Pelicans



After your launcher locks onto the turrets, fire away to destroy them.

Well, guess now we know why this game is called Halo 2.... As soon as you take control of Master Chief, flip yourself over to your rockets and start gunning for the three turrets higher up on the hill near your landing spot. All you need to do to get a lock on one of the turrets is zoom in on it with your right analog stick and hover your aiming reticle over it for a second; you'll automatically lock on and can then fire with the right trigger. Each turret will take one rocket to destroy, and there should be three turrets total, so keep an eye out for them as you scale the hill.

You'll come to some ruins at the top of the hill; as soon as you see the checkpoint notification, some Elites will start appearing there, as well as a sniper on the upper floors. Your teammates will likely die off rather quickly, but if you're willing to put their sacrifice to good use, you can scale the ramp near the large wall and use their distraction to attack the Elites from behind with grenades or whatever other weapons you have at your disposal. Eventually, though, you'll have to start taking down everyone by yourself, so use whatever natural cover you have at your disposal to do so. One of the landing pods near the cliff here has a battle rifle laying beside it, which you'll probably want to use to clear out the sniper. You should also use whatever remaining rocket rounds you have on the Elites; aim at their feet to eliminate most of their shields, then switch over to another weapon and finish them off.

After Sarge radios in to let you know that he's starting his approach, you'll have to fend off a few more waves of Covenant, presumably to prevent them from manning the artillery again. One of the turrets overlooking the ruins may be functional, but you'll probably get killed by the dropships as they approach to offload their wares, so be cautious about manning it. You'll probably be able to outfit yourself with dual SMGs or dual plasma rifles from the corpses of your teammates and the Covenant, so do so, and use whatever armaments you require to kill off the Elites as they appear. A good plan of attack is to withdraw a bit from the dropzone, use your battle rifle to kill

any Grunts or Jackals, then quickly switch over to dual-wielding to finish off the Elites.

Extend the Bridge, and Cross the Chasm



Don't worry about the vehicles here; just charge ahead and get inside the building to extend the bridge.

A Warthog will get dropped to you at this point, along with a couple of soldiers with which to man it. You won't have it for very long, though, as you'll quickly come to a chasm with a retracted bridge. The building here houses controls for the bridge, so ignore all of the fighting outside and slam on the gas until you reach one of the entrances, then hop out of your ride and head inside. Your teammates are likely toast, but ignore them and kill off the building's defenders before extending the bridge with the controls.

Push Through the Covenant-held Ruins

By the time you reach the exterior of the building, everyone should be dead, including the Covenant forces, which will allow another Pelican to drop a Scorpion for you. You should be able to make exceedingly short work of the Wraiths with it, so take them out. Don't go across the bridge just yet, though; the destruction of the Wraiths will trigger the appearance of a pair of Banshees from the direction of the huge enemy vessel in the matte-painting background; use your cannon to take them out from long range. If you cross the bridge immediately after destroying the Wraiths, the Banshees will get you from behind. Ghosts will also appear as you cross the bridge, so stay on your guard as you proceed through the ruins.

You Break It, You Buy It



If your Scorpion's about to die, let an AI teammate drive it.

As soon as you see this header pop up, stop your Scorpion and start shelling the far side of the little courtyard. There are numerous Jackals here, as well as an endless stream of Ghosts, so you'll want to take out all of the turrets in the opposite building before you get into their range. After that's done, proceed through another interior section of the ruins before you come to a large, fortress-like building. The exterior walls here will be mounted with turrets, so be careful if you intend to make a lap around the central structure; if you still have a teammate on your Scorpion (and if you still have your Scorpion, of course), you may want to let her take over the driving while you proceed on foot, as AI drivers have perfectly good aim, and it's obviously better for them to die than you if the vehicle explodes.

Your goal here is to penetrate into the central building; you can find a passageway to the left of the large concentration of forcefields near where you came into the courtyard, on the upper level. Heading towards it will spawn a force of something like half a dozen Elites and Grunts, however, so be cautious, and try to have a full load of plasma grenades before moving in, since you'll likely be solo at this point. Fortunately, after you get through the first wave and make it to the garden at the center of the structure, more troops will arrive to back you up, so push on with them into the garden and clear it out; it'll mostly be populated by Grunts and Jackals, so dual-wielded plasma rifles should be all you need.

Off the Rock, Through the Bush, Nothing But Jackal

When you reach the waterfall, kill off the Jackal sniper that's walking along the creek, then use his beam rifle to start picking off any more foes in the clearing below you. As you walk along, your movement will, of course, encourage more enemies to spawn in, so keep a beam rifle handy and

try to snipe as many of them as possible when you spot them. Drones will eventually start appearing again, though, so you'll want to have some kind of rapid-fire device at your disposal. There's only one exit from the clearing, near the Covenant equipment pods across the way from the waterfall, so fight towards it.

Reach the Towers in the Lake

You'll eventually spot a series of huge structures built onto a lake. You should have plenty of sniper ammo or a fresh beam rifle from the pods near the exit from the clearing, so use your long-distance weapon to pick off any Jackals or Elites that you can spot from your little perch. Your shots will attract Drones, however, so be prepared with a short-range weapon. When you don't have any targets left, ditch your sniper rifle and load up with dual SMGs from the equipment pods nearby and either a carbine or a battle rifle.



Honor guards are a bit tougher than normal Elites, but even they can't live through a close-range plasma grenade explosion.

When you reach the interior of the structure, you'll have to deal with four honor guard Elites, packing plasma rifles and energy blades. As per usual, the best way to deal with these guys is by sticking a plasma grenade on their butt, but drop your second SMG somewhere nearby, as they won't be able to stand up to dual SMGs for long, either. After they're all dead, you'll get a new assignment.

Regret

Testament

Make Your Way Through the First Set of Towers.

After the initial firefight here (in which you should, as always, hang back while your teammates do the hard work), scavenge for equipment before heading up the ramps and to the right. You'll come out onto one of the exterior walkways, but don't get all snipe-happy just yet; a red Elite will soon come around the corner, so watch your radar and try to peg him with a plasma grenade when he's in sight. That'll take care of him, but you'll still have to deal with his little Grunt friends, so blast them all. After they're dead, start pegging snipers - there's a beam rifle in the hallway - and moving around to the left, towards the sole bridge that's still intact. Use your teammates as human shields, as necessary.



Um...catch?

After crossing the bridge, you may want to switch out whatever long-range weapon you have for your teammate's shotgun, as the rooms beyond tend to be a bit on the cramped side. You can use it on the Grunts and the Jackals that appear; you won't have to deal with more Elites until you come out on the far side. The large land bridge here, though, is the scene of a Hunter ambush; when you clear out the snipers, they get unloaded by dropships. If you still have any teammates here, you can use them to help you kill off the Hunters, but only if you manage to keep the Hunters focused on you. This can be accomplished by staying fairly close to them and strafing around them. Obviously enough, this is easier if you focus on one of the Hunters and kill it with plasma grenades and beam rifle fire, then deal with the other one.

When everything's dead, you'll get resupplied by a Pelican, but you won't have a whole lot of time to examine the weaponry before a gondola approaches with more Covenant on it. You'll need to kill as many of them as time allows before the gondola arrives, so whip out a beam or sniper rifle and go to town, focusing especially on any Elites that pop their heads out. When everything's

cleared out, you can use the gondola to take you to the far tower.

One-Way Ticket

Ride the Gondola to the Far Towers



If you picked up a sniper rifle, use it to kill off the turret gunners before the gondola reaches the far tower.

Predictably enough, your ride to the tower isn't going to be uneventful; you'll have to deal both with Drones and with a small combat party on the other gondola as it passes by. As you approach the tower, a predictable ambush will appear. Don't worry too much about the turrets above you, though; concentrate on clearing out the enemies in the hallway, then head in there to get out of the turret's fire.

Pass Through the Submerged Structures

Head on into the rooms nearby and kill everything that moves before walking up the ramp. The Grunt outside will pack a fuel rod gun, though, so proceed with caution, lest you get blasted. You have to kill him in order to trigger the appearance of an elevator in the room through which you just passed, so wait for it to arrive, then kill the Jackals within. Before you head down, though, a Pelican may appear to refresh your teammate loadout, so wait for that to occur before hitting the button. A long elevator ride ensues.

When you arrive at your destination, you'll have to blast your way through a corridor full of Grunts, and then enter another large, enclosed room with a hologram of the Prophet inside. There are two entrances here: one on the ground level, one at the top of the nearby ramps. Whichever

way you proceed, you'll have to deal with numerous Jackals and Elites, including some honor guards, so hopefully both of your teammates will help out. You may want to give one of them the fuel rod gun, if you still possess it, as they have the small benefit of unlimited ammo.



This fight's pretty much impossible to win, so just run past these guys.

Your goal isn't to kill everything in the Prophet-room, though, and the appearance of a pair of Hunters, in addition to the numerous other enemies, will likely make that impossible. Rather, all you have to do is escape, so proceed to the far end, head down to the bottom of the ramps, and exit through the door beneath them.

The watery room beyond has a number of stealthed enemies, including a pair of Elites, with another one waiting at the door beyond. You should be able to find a pair of plasma rifles underneath the ramp heading down, though, along with a couple of plasma grenades, so clean out the room with those.

Reach the Main Temple

After another submerged elevator ride, you'll come out in a small building. Kill off the Elites and Grunts, then head out to the doorway leading outside. Your path here is going to be blocked by Drones, which are easily dispatched as they cluster around the doorway, and Elites, which will be a bit more problematic due to their position. They have a height advantage on you, and will be difficult to take down with any of your short range weapons, but you should be able to find a carbine in the hallway before the Prophet's hologram; use it to bust a move on at least one of the Elites before heading out and killing off any other enemies.



You'll want to be behind this wall when the dropships arrive.

At this point, you'll get an ammo and personnel refresh, which is good, because a dropship in the next area will drop numerous Jackals, Elites, and Grunts into a small, walled-off area. If your teammates are exposed while the dropship comes overhead, they'll probably be toasted by its turrets, so try to hit behind the large rock across from the entrance until it passes on, then use them to assault the Covenant and rout them.

Next up you have another gondola ride, so re-equip from the pods before heading aboard. There are two rocket launchers here, so if you have any teammates, you'll probably want to make sure that at least one of them is packing one, while the other guy might be best suited with a sniper rifle. Keep the other rocket launcher for yourself.

After you hit the first checkpoint on the gondola, get to the rear of your ship and start locking on to the Banshees that will approach. They each require two rocket shots to take out, so hopefully your teammate will give you a hand here. If you can't take them down quickly, you'll have to deal with them and a pair of flying Elites on the other gondola simultaneously, which is essentially suicide. The flying Elites alone will be a pain in the butt, since there aren't many places to hide from their fire aboard the gondola. If worst comes to worst, crouch below one of the low walls on the lower portion of the float and hope they miss you until your shields recharge. If you still have a sniper along, try to coordinate your fire with his so that you hit the Elite just after he does; this will let you drop their shields much more quickly.

When you make landfall on the shores of the temple (a teammate with a rocket launcher will be helpful in killing off the defenders), you'll have your mission reiterated to you once more.

Sorry, Were You in the Middle of Something?

Kill the Prophet of Regret, and Escape

Fight your way into the temple here, being mindful of the presence of energy blade-wielding honor guards, who can kill you with a single blow if they get close. There's no easy weapon loadout here, but focus on the close-range stuff, as quarters are tight.

The Prophet of Regret is situated in the main temple room; you'll know you're in it when you see him floating around over the dais on the side of the room opposite from the entrance. This is essentially an arcade-style fight, where you have to find his weakness before the never-ending floor of honor guards and Grunts kills you; the Prophet is immune to all forms of ranged attacks, and plasma grenades just bounce off of his energy shield. The solution? You're going melee.

Not that it's as cut and dried as going up and whacking him with an energy blade, of course; his honor guards will be relentlessly firing at you as you attempt to close in on the Prophet, and will pelt you with more rounds from their plasma rifles after you disengage. The Prophet himself has an extremely powerful laser, which stings horribly when it connects, but which shouldn't be too difficult to dodge.



When you weigh a half-ton like Master Chief, you can put a little power behind your punches.

The basic string of actions here, then, involve starting out from one of the upper platforms on either side of the room. The Prophet will usually be down near the platform below, allowing you to jump off of the platform and get a good idea for where you'll be landing. If you did get an energy blade, equip it before you charge in, and click the right trigger as soon as your reticule changes red to get off a powerful melee attack. (This can be performed even when you're in midair.) When

you get the prompt to jump on his vehicle, though, hold X to do so, then start wailing on him with your fist.

Any enemies in the area will fire away at you while you do so, but you'll be protected by the Prophet's energy shield, so just keep wailing until he teleports away. When he does teleport out (as presaged by a large golden glow), you'll probably be surrounded by furious Elites, so this is when you'll usually wind up dying, but if you can make it to one of the many small side passages, you should be able to recharge your shields. Just keep an eye on your radar as you proceed in the fight, as the honor guards have a habit of coming up behind you and getting cheap one-hit kills by slashing you in the back. (The "OMG LOLZ NEWB!!!" taunts don't help much, either.)

You'll require three or four runs of melee attacks on the Prophet before he goes kaploolie, after which time the level ends automatically.

Sacred Icon

Uncomfortable Silence

Lower the Containment-Shield



Aim directly for the white holes in the wall to destroy the Sentinel generators.

There isn't much you can do in the beginning room here. Although the small wisps moving out spec as enemies on your radar, they won't hurt you, so just ignore them and head towards the large white pillarish-looking thing in the rear of the room. If you walk around it and point your gun

at the white spots on any of its four faces, you should notice your targeting reticle turn from white to red over one of them. Shoot it to reveal a passageway leading down. (If you don't want to waste ammo, you can use kinetic energy - i.e. your melee attack - to do the job.) You'll have to repeat the process again until you reach a room with Sentinal beam-wielding Sentinals. You can kill these guys as much as you want, but more spawn after a short time. If you want, you can use a Sentinal beam yourself to destroy the Sentinal generators, but they aren't much of a threat if you just pass them by.

Down one more level, you'll find that more Covenant troops have magically appeared, but they're in a room with half a dozen or so Sentinal generators. Since you have an endless supply of Sentinal beams (from killing Sentinals), feel free to use them to destroy the generators.

Eventually, the Covenant equivalent of Sarge will let you know that you're close to a shield generator, so keep fighting through the power couplinks until you can reach the main reactor to shut down the dilithium crystals. Or something like that.

Power Up the Four Absorbers to Lower the Containment-Shield



The Guardian looks fairly intimidating, but isn't too difficult to defeat.

Long story short, you'll come to the generator room, which is guarded by a massive mechanical beast. Essentially, it's a bigger version of the Sentinals you've been laying waste to, save with rocket barrages and what sound like rapid-fire needlers. We don't know for sure; we were hiding. It's not too difficult to kill, though, so long as you avoid staying out in the open. After it kills off any of your followers, drop down into its lair and use the walls and small bunkers to hide, then dart out into the open while stealthed and fire away at it from behind its shields. You should notice parts of it falling away as you do so. After you dish out a beating, retreat back into cover

and wait for your stealth to recharge before repeating the process, and the guardian will eventually fall to the floor with a clatter.

Now that that's out of the way, you have to charge up the four absorbers. Whack them with your fists until they start to charge up, but keep an ear out for the Sentinel generators, as they'll start popping in after the second or third absorber has been activated. When they're all good, the entire generator room reveals itself to be a gigantic movable platform, which will take you to the Library.

Buyer's Remorse

Make Your Way Through the Flood-infested Wall

The best laid plans often go awry, and Sarge's intention to pick you up on the far side of the chasm isn't implemented due to the appearance of another Guardian and more Sentinals. These are actually super-Sentinals, in fact, with shields and upgraded weaponry; they act much the same as their predecessors did, though, so they're not difficult to kill off. While the Guardian is dealing with the Flood zombies, shell it with whatever weapons you can find on the ground until it pops, then make your way through the Sentinals and zombies by jumping into the next corridor. Said corridor has another energy-absorbant elevator thingy in it, so whack it a few times to unlock the passage downwards.

Keep moving onwards (ever onwards) until you hear a human voice in your headset. This is when you should take stock of your ammo and weapons, and get ready for the first really difficult Flood battle thus far. They'll come at you with human zombies, and thus, human weapons, so you'll want to be able to deal with them from a distance. Sentinals will also spawn in this area; not in infinite numbers, but enough to let you use Sentinel beams without hesitation. Make your way through the masses to another elevator. This will lead to an exterior walkway where more Guardians are fighting off Flood zombies; ignore the combat and hang a left until you reach another elevator. It may look like you've doubled back onto the scene you left before, but apparently there are two Guardians here, so just keep moving in a straight line until you hit the elevator, then take another step towards the bottom of wherever you are.

Wow, spooky dust-filled rooms! Anyway, more Flood zombies appear. Feel free to chuck any frag grenades you have at them as they approach, since they'll drop more. This leads to another set of generator rooms, similar in fashion to the ones you fought through earlier in the level, before you defeated the first Guardian, save for the fact that they're poorly-lit and are populated by more zombies than Sentinals. Regardless, you'll have to fight your way through, or just run, until you reach another elevator. This one will lead to yet another elevator, which leads to...the beginning of the level! Congratulations, you get to do it all over again! Well, it's actually just a spitting-image of the beginning of the level, but it's hard not to imagine this as a wink-wink in-joke about Halo's repetitive use of similar-looking rooms and hallways.

Regardless, fall into the passage until you come to another landing bay, where Flood zombies are fighting off a Covenant dropship. Although the zombies are your kinsmen, give them no quarter, and slay as many as you need to get to the elevator, which leads to - you guessed it - another ventilation shaft-esque passageway down.

100,000 Year's War

Rendezvous With Your Allies in the Covenant Camp

Finally, some solid ground underneath you. You'll also obtain a few Elite helpers here, so bust through the Flood on the far side of the chasm, then stroll through the small rock corridor nearby, which leads to the Covenant camp.



Either use a turret or destroy them; otherwise they'll be turned against you.

After your arrival, you'll be forced to defend the camp, with your allies, against a few waves of zombies. If you picked up a rocket launcher earlier, give it to one of your friends to let them better blast away at the enemies, but don't hesitate to take it away if they exhibit poor target selection. The one item of note here is that the zombies will mount the plasma turrets if there's no one in them, so if you don't intend to use one, destroy it with whatever weapons you have before they arrive. After you fend off the horde, the chapter ends.

Quarantine Zone

Objects in Mirror are Larger Than They Appear

Push Through the Quarantine-Zone Toward the Library

You'll have a really fun time getting through the first part of this mission, as you and a few Elites will have to man various vehicles and fight your way past Guardians. Your best bet is to hop into the Spectre, which is essentially the Covenant version of the Warthog. You can choose to be either the driver or gunner here, but you'll probably want to drive, if only because the Guardians have

shielding that you'll need to bypass.

Speaking of which, as soon as the mission begins, a Guardian will pop out of the doorway leading into the Library. The safest place to be with these guys is underneath them, as they don't appear to be able to fire at you while you're down there, and your gunner will be able to pound away on their undersides until they're destroyed. You have two Ghosts along with you as well, which should distract the Guardians while you pound away at it. If you want, you can run past the Guardians, but you'll probably have to leave behind your Ghost accompaniment if you wish to do so, which can turn the entire level into something of a sprint.



If you're having trouble getting through this room, you might want to try finding a Ghost and just zipping through.

Inside the next room, though, you'll have a more troublesome set of foes, in the form of a few Guardians, respawning Sentinals, and a few other mechanical threats. The Guardians, of course, should be your priority here, so repeat the process of killing them before taking on the Sentinals. There are also Flood zombies here, driving human vehicles, such as a Warthog and Scorpion. If your Spectre is hurting, you can keep an eye out for other vehicles to jack, but be sure the area is relatively clear before you do so.. Also, watch your radar to detect any enemies; there are Heretic forces in the room, some of which will drive Ghosts, so it can be a bit confusing to discern between friendly Ghosts and enemy Ghosts.

Healthy Competition

As you come out into an exterior portion of the level, you'll have to deal with more Flood and Heretic forces. Be mindful of the fact that any vehicles you left behind in the Guardian room will

pursue you to here; the Warthog or Ghosts will be an especially cumbersome load to shake. Rather than kill every single thing that moves, your best bet is to charge to the bottom of the ramp and proceed on to the next area, where multiple Heretic Wraiths will be contending with Guardians. None of your previous foes are likely to follow you through here.

Although you don't have any friends here, you should do your best to keep the Guardians alive as long as possible, if only because they'll help wipe out the Wraiths. To begin with, distract the first Wraith near the entrance and try to get it to swing around; this will let the Guardians blow it without taking much damage. After they refocus themselves on other targets, start making your way across the makeshift paths to the right. As you cross a chasm, more Ghosts and Flood forces will spawn in. You'll need to be particularly careful about any rocket-launcher wielding Flood; these guys will tend to hold off atop the ledge here and shell you from above, so watch for the smoke trails and be prepared to floor it underneath the overhang when you spot them.

Further on, you'll come to a large cave entrance. As you approach, prepare for two scripted events: the spawning of pairs of Ghosts from the cave, and the appearance of four Sentinals and a Guardian from without. If you can, maneuver through the cacophony and make your way through the cave, preferably on a Ghost yourself, if you can find a relatively undamaged one. Inside the cave, you'll be forced to ditch your ride and maneuver into a rocky passageway, but getting there will be the trick, as more Sentinals and a Scorpion will be fighting it out.



In general, if Sentinals are firing at something other than yourself, let them do so. They might kill what they're shooting, and they're easy enough to kill later.

After proceeding through the passageway, you'll come to some sort of reactor room, where a Guardian and Sentinals are fighting with forces unseen. There's another passageway in the far corner of the room, so reequip yourself if necessary, then run across the floor to safety.

Another exterior canyon follows where (guess what!) the Flood will be battling Sentinals and Guardians. As ever, do your best to avoid any enemies you come across, and make your way across the canyon floor to another cave towards the northwest. A half-dozen Flood will come pouring out as you approach, and there'll likely be more behind you, so stealth yourself as you round the bend and try to get behind them. If they spot you, start chucking grenades; if not, just leave them be and move on.

You'll find yourself in another reactor room here, this time populated solely by Flood zombies. One of them, a converted human soldier, packs an energy blade, so try to stealth your way across the floor towards the upper platform on the other side to find him. When you have the energy blade, you should be able to clear out the rest of the Flood easily, then turn your attention to the Sentinals in the passage beyond. Load up with a rocket launcher before heading out, though.

In the next room, you have respawning Ghosts, a Wraith, and a Warthog to deal with, as well as miscellaneous Flood zombies walking around on the floor. Your tools here include whatever weapons you're packing, an empty Ghost (found by dropping off the ledge and following the wall to the left) and an empty Scorpion. The Scorp is obviously the biggest prize here, but getting to it in one piece can be difficult. If you're handy with the stealth, you can activate that and make your way to it undetected, but actually using it for more than a second before dying will be tough. One of the zombies appears to have a rocket launcher, so you'll want to kill him before you mount up; you might also just want to use your own rocket launcher to kill off the Ghosts and Warthogs, and even perhaps the Wraith, if possible, from the ledge overlooking this room before you waltz in.

Link Up with the Spec-Ops Leader, and Break Through the Flood Barricade



From this ledge, you should be able to take out the incoming vehicles without having

to face them head-on.

After moving on, you'll be greeted by a Covenant dropship that'll offload a Spectre and more troops. If you still have the Scorpion, this is obviously a downgrade, but the Spectre will remain here, if you want to return to it as the Scorpion runs low on health. Now, as you move on, more enemies, both Flood and mechanical, will spawn in, so do your best to take it slow. You might want to avoid the tunnel across the chasm at first, and instead roll up further along the near side of the canyon, blasting away at the Flood vehicles as they arrive.

Next up is another big melee between Flood vehicles and mechanicals. The Flood seems to have taken over the large building here, so you'll need to proceed in, blast any of the defenders (while watching for the turrets on the platform), then exit your vehicle and head through the small doorway through which the enemies are coming. You'll find a gondola-like transport here.

Shooting Gallery

Retrieve the Sacred Icon Before the Humans



As ever, an energy sword is your best bet for dealing with the zombies, so search around for one on a fallen ally.

There isn't much to do here save survive, as wave after wave of Flood zombies assault the gondola. You have plenty of teammates at the beginning, but they'll quickly succumb to the hordes. Due to the movement of the platform, you won't be able to rely on rockets to clear out concentrations of enemies, so instead, use your plasma grenades as often as you like; the zombies will drop plenty of them. Beyond that, an energy blade/shotgun combo will serve you

well, as the zombies will tend to get up close and personal.

That Old, Familiar Feeling

You don't actually have to retrieve the icon here; there isn't, in fact, much you can do beyond watch a succession of cutscenes. After the bizarre congress with Audrey II, you'll take over as Master Chief.

Gravemind

Inside Job

Locate the Prophet of Truth and the Index



You'll probably never use a needler on anything but a Brute, but they're remarkably effective against these guys.

Ugh, this is a tough fight! Or, rather, a tough series of fights, as you'll have to face down multiple waves of Grunts and Brutes. These latter enemies have apparently taken the place of Elites as the right-hand men of the Prophets, and although they don't pack an energy shield, they can take a huge amount of damage and will occasionally go berserk and attempt to ram you with their heads. Your best bet when attempting to take them down? We never thought we'd say this, but: dual-wielded needlers. The Brutes appear to be exceptionally weak to the explosive effects of needler ammo, and rather resistant to most other forms of damage, so these are really your only

option, unless you want to get close enough to plant a plasma grenade on their hides.

The fighting itself is rather quotidian, if rather more difficult than most other encounters. Use the pillars near the door on the end of the room opposite from where the Prophet descended to hide from enemy fire while killing off your enemies. Watch out for carbine-wielding Brutes that will descend from the grandstands and fire at you as you engage the enemies below. After three to four waves of enemies, Cortana will unlock the doorway, letting you move on.

After killing off the Grunts and Brutes, move on into what is rather evidently an important room, filled with glowing white light and more honor guards. After you dispatch the honor guards, more Brutes will start popping out from the platform on the far side of the room, leaving you to contend with half a dozen or so in all, including a lieutenant with a Brute shot weapon, which is essentially a cleaver/grenade launcher. You can distinguish the lieutenant from the others by the red flag on his back.

Due to the number of Brutes and open design of the room, it's going to be next to impossible to use your needlers to kill them off. Now that you have access to Covenant carbines, though (check the corpses), you can use those to off the Brutes and the other forces in the room from a distance. The sequence is simple: pop out of the door, zoom out on a likely target, blast away until your shields fall, then retreat behind the doors until you can recharge. Since the Brutes don't have shield generators, you don't have to deal all of your damage at once; you can wear them down over time.

After dispatching all of the Brutes, descend to the bottom of the gravlift and start making your way into the lower levels of the temple facility. If you see a beam rifle, you might want to pick it up, as the Brutes are just as susceptible to headshots as the lesser foes you'll be facing. You can also find ammo pods for needlers and the carbine in the first Brute-infested hallway you pass through.

Rescue the Marines Being Held in the Detention-Block

Continue moving along until Cortana points you towards a room with another lift. Dispatch the Brute guardians with needlers or carbine, then head down into a longish lift that leads to another abattoir...of doom!

Your arrival won't alert the guards here, but you won't be able to escape their detention for long. Your best bet here is to kill the Brute near the lift by attaching a plasma grenade to his back, then fighting your way through the Grunts on either side of the lift until you can hide behind the small curved window. From there, you should be able to use your carbine and grenades (and perhaps the Brute shot, if you picked it up from the display near the lift) to repel your attackers.



The Marines trapped in the detention block are eager to help aid in their escape.

There are three levels to the detention block, connected by a series of elevator pads at the rear of the room. Take advantage of the good sightlines to snipe out any enemies on lower levels with your carbine, then meet up with Cortana on the third level down to access the brig where the Marines are being held. Killing all of the guards in the brig will free three Marines, whom you'll have to bring back up to the middle level in the face of some more Grunt and Brute opposition. Another group of Marines awaits on the second level, so free everyone before exiting the Detention Block. Unfortunately, you can't rearm these Marines, so you'll have to let them choose their own weapons. No Brute shooting teammates, in other words.

After you assemble your team, you'll have to fight your way back up to the main lift. If you can rush there after Cortana tells you that enemies are coming down, you can pop them off as they arrive with a Brute shot, as they're mainly Grunts and Jackals, with a pair of Brutes coming down last. When Cortana announces that the lift is clear, head on up and start tracking down the Prophet.

Follow the Prophet of Truth to the Far Tower

More corridor-crawling soon commences. Luck is on your side, though, as it appears that the Elites are rebelling against the new order, so you should have some chaos to take advantage of. If you want your teammates to survive, focus on the Brutes before they can close in on you, as they'll quickly make corpses of your friends with their melee attacks. They're unlikely to live long anyway, but it's worth a shot! Beware the door at the end of the first corridor, as the ominous sound of distant doors opening portends the arrival of half a dozen or so Drones. You should be able to pick them off from one of the small hiding spots on either side of the main corridor.

Further on, you'll encounter a pair of Hunters. If you absolutely must kill them, try backtracking

and picking up a pair of Brute plasma rifles, then firing away at their unprotected bits. Brute shots may also work. Your best bet, though, is to time their paths and make a break for the far door. If you're lucky, you might be able to avoid getting their attention, thus bypassing the threat altogether.



Even Hunters aren't able to stand up to headshots, but be sure you hit it from behind!

More chaos is breaking out in the exterior area beyond the Hunters, as the Elites fight their little insurgence. As you exit the door, take a right and clear out any resistance near the sniper's platform here, then rise up to the top and use a beam rifle to kill off any enemies below you. Another Hunter will be pacing around, but if you wait until it turns its back, you should be able to kill it with a single sniper shot to the back of the head.

Make your way across the clearing, but beware of the Brute shot-wielding Brute who'll appear from behind the door there. After you take the long floating walkway, and see the ship pass overhead, you'll have to deal with another exterior walkway where Brutes and Elites are partaking in combat. These guys aren't too much of a hassle to deal with from a distance, thanks to your carbine, but as you near the exit from the path, two flying Elites will pop up overhead, and they can be a terrific pain to kill, thanks to their shields and the fact that you don't have any real cover. If you're feeling lucky, you might want to try walking around the platform to the right and seeing if you can't shift their attention to the participants in the battle there, but this is risky due to the fact that there's a checkpoint position in the middle of the path. If you happen to save in a bad spot, you might have to start the level over again, so your best bet is to get dual Brute plasma rifles, hide underneath one of the arches, and wait for them to get close before blasting one of them, and then repeating the process. You can also try attaching a plasma grenade to them, if you wish.

Beyond the flying Elites, there'll be another set of enemies, so smash your way through them to the levitation plate. You'll come out to an interior room where Drones are fighting against yet more flying Elites. Do your best to hang back near the doorway and kill off the Elites from there; you don't want to get too close to them, lest you get singed by their dual plasma rifles. There should be two elites at first, with two arriving after a moment from the doorway on the far side of the room, Brutes hot on their tail. The Brutes and other enemies are easy to kill, so take down the Elites first.

After another levitation pad, you'll come to what appears to be the last redoubt before the far tower, with energy shields scattered about and a great many weapons pods there for the looting. A pair of Brutes will be systematically destroying a gaggle of Grunts, so wait for them to finish their handiwork before killing them, reequipping yourself, and moving through another levitation pad.

Stop the Prophet of Truth From Boarding His Phantom

Three Brutes with Brute shots will stand in your path after you exit the platform, but if you retreat back to the doorway through which you came, you may be able to take advantage of their AI and snipe them with a carbine without taking any return fire. In the next area, you'll have to deal with some Elites at close range, so you might want to avoid picking up a Brute shot; elites can take up to three direct hits from the grenades, making it less than stellar when used against them.

After you do clear out the Elites and Brutes, though, head up the ramp and be ready for a pair of energy blade-wielding invisible Elites. Kill them and the Grunts to gain access to the tower.

When you're inside the tower, you'll have to cut a swath through the foyer to a room with numerous Grunts and Elites. It appears the battle lines have been drawn, with Grunts and Elites on one side and Jackals and Brutes on the other, but unfortunately, there aren't any of the latter enemies around. If you can clear out some of the Elites, though, passing through to the rear of the room will trigger a Brute and a pair of Jackals to enter from the rear door, which should give you a bit of combat to take advantage of. In the hallway before this room, you can find a fully-loaded fuel rod gun, which should come in handy in the fight. You'll want to save at least five rounds for it, though, as you may need them soon.



If you have to take on all of these guys at once, get ready to reload a lot.

It only gets tougher from there, though, as the next open corridor features a full-on assault between forces of Brutes, Jackals, Grunts, and Elites. You'll enter this fight from the rear of the Brutes; if you can slip in while they're distracted, you should be able to knife the Jackal on the right side of the walkway and grab his beam rifle, which you can use to snipe away at the Elites on the far side while they're busy firing away at the Brutes or the Drones which follow them. Even after you've cleaned out the bridge, though, you'll have to deal with a pair of Hunters that spawn in from the far door as you approach it. If you still have any ammo for your fuel rod gun, use it on the Hunters, as they seem to be weak to that type of fire; if not, you're going to be in deep doo-doo, as the Hunters will be flanked by numerous Grunts and Elites. If you're desperate, you may be able to split the force into two groups by creeping forward until you see the first enemies coming out of the door, then retreating back all the way to the opposite side of the bridge. It worked once for us, but no guarantees!

The next room is even more fun, as multiple Hunters, Brutes, and Elites all get into one big mosh pit for a fracas. Although Cortana recommends sitting the fight out, you should actually wrap around the right side of the pit and kill off any Elites that you can; if both the Elites and the Hunters work on the Brutes, they won't last long, and you'll have more enemies to kill. After the Elites are dead, let the Brutes and Hunters dish out as much damage as they can to each other, then take out the last man standing. Cortana will let you know that the Sarge and Miranda are following Truth, and that you have to help them.

ARGH, this next fight is tough, especially on higher difficulties. You're going to be facing off against four or five Elites at once, including a couple of stealthed individuals, and what appears to be an ultra-class baddie. Depending on your armament, you could have serious problems getting past this fight. We finally managed to kill them all with an energy blade, a fully-loaded carbine,

and three plasma grenades.

Unfortunately for you, the enemies won't wait for you to approach the door after the fight between the Brutes and Hunters is over; they'll eventually burst through of their own accord shortly after Cortana tells you about Miranda and Sarge. If you want, you can try to hang back and blast them with your carbine from a distance, but it'll be incredibly difficult to drop their shields and kill them before getting wasted yourself. Our tactic was to wait just in front of the door leading out of the arena, wait for them to open it up, then chuck our grenades at likely targets before dropping down into the pit and retreating underneath the overhang. With any luck, you should be able to get two of them with grenades; the rest will have to be taken out individually.

When you're underneath the overhang, you can try to lure more Elites down to you with your carbine. If you get a chance to tag them a few times as they descend, then you should be able to cut them down with a single lock-on slash from your energy blade, but you should just keep tapping the right trigger in the hopes that they don't live long enough to slash you back. The ultra-class Elite will, of course, be the toughest of the bunch. If you can isolate him, you may be able to kill him at a distance with your carbine, but it'll probably take at least two reloads to wear down his shields and then deal the finishing blow. When he runs away to hide, find him and destroy him!

Luckily, this is the last fight of the level, so kill everything that moves and get the heck out of here.

Uprising

Oh, So That's How It Is

Defend Yourself From the Brutes



In the worst-case scenario, you can use dual-wielded rifles to take down these Brutes as they approach.

All you initially have to use against the Brutes in the clearing is a plasma rifle, but you'll find an energy sword soon enough, and that's going to be your most useful tool against the beasts. Make your way down the path, using your stealth ability to get behind the Brutes for a quick kill, or to get close enough to attach plasma grenades to them, which will prove similarly fatal. You'll have five or so to kill in all before you finally reach a clearing, but don't head in immediately; move in slowly to provoke the Brutes on the ledge nearby to reveal themselves, then fall back. They'll start coming towards you, but slowly, and one by one, which should allow you to kill them easily.

Repeat the process of stealthing before killing until you reach the ledge, wherein more Elites will drop in and join you.

Extract Vengeance on the Brute Traitors

Technically speaking, it's the Elites that are the traitors here, at least so far as we're keeping score, but history being written by the victors, perhaps it's a good idea to keep a positive twist on things. Regardless, you'll need to use the Elites to blast through a succession of Brutes and Drone enemies until you reach the far door in the large room here. Just stay back and use your energy sword to lock onto and destroy any Brutes that get involved in melee with your friends, then dual-wield plasma rifles to cut a swatch through the Drones that guard the door itself.

The next room is simple enough to clear, if you have a few plasma grenades. Although the Jackals and Brutes are well-defended, you can throw down your stash of grenades onto their heads to destroy most of them, then just strafe any survivors with your plasma rifles to finish them off. If you kill one of the Brutes, the other is likely to go berserk, so watch for it as it comes up the ramp.



Your teammates will be able to jump to these small ledges, but we don't recommend trying it yourself; you're liable to fall all the way into the pit of Brutes below.

The room beyond will see you descending downwards across four tiers. The first tier below the entrance is populated by Jackals, which are easy enough to kill. They're not alerted to your presence until they spot you; you can take advantage of this by stealthing and standing on the edge of the tier to scout around below you. As a note, though, the room becomes all but impossible if you happen to shoot the weapon pod holding the needlers off of the second tier. If you manage to keep it in place, though, you can use it to clear out the third and the bottom tier by stealthing up to the edge, shooting off around a quarter bar's worth of ammo from each needler onto one of the Brute's heads, then retreating. Your friendly Elites will be a big help in drawing the third tier's Brutes out of their hiding spots.

The next room over will be similar to the one in which you used up your grenades earlier, save that there'll be more Brutes, including a wave that exits from the door at the rear after the fight begins, as well as a turret. Luckily, there's a fuel rod gun with 20 rounds in it near the door through which you enter, making it easy to cut down all of the Brutes. Before you head on, it'd be wise to switch out one of your weapons for the carbines at the bottom of the room, but keep the fuel rod gun. You'll find eight more rounds of ammo for it before you reach the surface of Halo again.

Step Aside, Let the Man Go Through

After you do step outside, kill off the Brutes and Jackals, then make your way to the right and do the same. You can conserve ammo for the fuel rod gun by picking off the Brutes with carbine

shots to the head.



Use the rock here for cover from the Hunters as you strafe out and take them down.

You'll come to some Ghosts eventually, so head round the bend, but before you ride in to kill off the Brutes around the rock, use your carbine to snipe out the Jackal sniper on top of the wall to the left, far ahead of you. When that's done, you can use the Ghost to strafe-and-kill every single Jackal and Brute around the side of the rock, using the rock itself as cover. You should have plenty of Ghosts in working condition, so try to eject yourself before one explodes and get another.

Around the bend past the Brutes, you'll need to kill the Jackal on the rise to the left, but leave the Grunt there. As you proceed and kill the Brutes and Jackals further into the clearing, a Spectre will appear; the Grunt will man the turret near him, which will hopefully distract the Spectre until you destroy it. When the enemy tank is dead, move back towards where it came from before more enemies can spawn, and switch out for a new Ghost, if need be.

Fight Your Way to the Canyon Floor Now that you've gotten a bit of momentum, it'll be ground to a halt, as you'll come to a Brute roadblock. You can dismantle the guards piece by piece from long range, but you might have to blind-fire at the snipers above the roadblock, unless you brought along a carbine or beam rifle. Regardless, once the snipers are gone, just fire away at anything that moves from long range; you should be able to kill them without having them return fire. Before heading through the road block, stop and grab one of the beam rifles that the snipers dropped.

Fight Club

Raze the Brute Encampment



You'll have to snipe as many of the Brutes here as possible before moving down into the lake area.

When you see the Fight Club pronouncement on your screen, hop off of your Ghost and start walking slowly down the stream. You'll see a quasi-arena at the bottom of the waterfall; your goal now is to kill off as many of its defenders as possible with your rifle before you have to head down there. There are two more snipers here, so be watchful for Jackals. There should also be a set of three Brutes, so headshot two of them, or three if you can; the last is likely to go berserk, though. If it does, let it run around; don't waste ammo trying to bring it down.

After everyone you see is either dead or berserk, walk down to the very edge of the waterfall and look to your left. You should see another group of Brutes appear from the gap in the wall there; you can imagine the kind of trouble you'd have been in had you just brought your Ghost down here all willy-nilly. Anyway, you can repeat the process on these Brutes, strafing back and forth from behind the wall to give you protection from their shots. If you're low on ammo, check around for another beam rifle on the floor; one of the snipers was right here near the end of the waterfall. If there isn't one, get as many shots in as you can before returning to the Ghost and bringing it over the falls. Use its cannons to destroy any stragglers.

Now the hard part begins. Inside the encampment's first section, you'll have to deal with an influx of Brutes, a Jackal sniper on a ledge in the second section, as well as a Wraith that will almost surely come from the second section back towards you when it spots you. Your best bet is to go up the ramp near the waterfall and duck into the small armory behind the first set of pillars; you can find a carbine there which should help you clear out the Brutes as they come in. Don't forget

to stealth when it's charged up; there's no easier kill on a Brute than attaching a grenade to its back, but if you're not stealthed, they're likely to run right toward you and take you with them. You can also find a shotgun in the armory, which is decent for taking out any berserking Brutes that you have to deal with. You'll have to take down a few waves of these guys before they let up, so prepare for a long haul.



Just jack the Wraith and leave it behind; better that than have it firing at you when you pass through the path above.

The Wraith will be a trickier fish. If you still have any fuel rod ammo, this would be an obvious time to use your gun to blow the thing to smithereens. If not, you can attempt to jack it, but you don't want to do this until you're sure that no Brutes will be pounding away at you as you do. Otherwise, small arms fire and grenades will have to do the trick.

After you've cleaned out the first section of the encampment, you can start worrying about the second section. If you move along the upper side of the ramp, you'll eventually trigger a pair of personnel pods, which will bring in a couple of Elites to back you up. This will also prompt a pair of Jackal snipers to replace the one you (hopefully) took out earlier, and will also likely get the attention of the other Wraith in the second area. Your teammates are probably going to die right quick if the Wraith attacks them (hopefully it won't!), but use the distraction they afford you to eliminate any remaining threats. The two snipers are going to be the worst of it; they take up positions directly on top of one another, so it's nearly impossible to strafe out so that only one of them is in your line of fire. On the bright side, a shot that hits the one in front should hit the one in back as well, so as long as they don't both peg you as soon as you step out of cover, you should be able to take them out. After they're both dead, regroup with any teammates you have left and head through the door that the Brutes were coming out of. If you wish to take out the second Wraith, jack it, kill the driver, then return back to the door and head through.

Inside, you'll find an armory, filled with glorious weapons. It doesn't pay to get too tricksterish with your allies' weapons; they'll do fine with the plasma rifles they have. If you want to risk giving one the rocket launcher and the other the fuel rod gun, be our guest, but don't be surprised when they blow themselves to bits. These guys will last a while if you take care of them, but you should have a checkpoint just before this, so feel free to try out different things. As for yourself, you'll need a beam rifle and some form of close-range power weapon; a Brute shot might be a good choice.

As you exit the next door, you'll have to deal with the immediate threat of Brutes on your left, so take them out with rockets, fuel rods, grenades, or whatever. After things settle down a bit, retreat back to the door and locate the two snipers off to the right and snipe them back, using the door for cover. You can then push through the remainder of the Brutes and Jackals to the cave beyond. All that stands between you and the level's end is a single group of Brutes and Jackals.

High Charity

Cross-Purposes

Fight Your Way Back Inside the Mausoleum-Tower

The Flood is coming, including a few Elite zombies. You won't have much time to kill them from a distance, though, and you won't have a good weapons loadout. Our opinion? Run like hell. If you start running back into the building, jumping like a madman to evade fire, you'll eventually come to a squad of Brutes. They'll gun for you, sure, but if you can evade their fire (again, jumping helps) and get past them, you'll come to a lift that Cortana locks behind you, meaning that you just saved yourself from having to fight through like a bazillion enemies. Or maybe ten, but the point is that you survived!



Sure glad you're not these zombies; the Drones will be swinging by to get you soon enough, though.

Now that you're up the lift, walk out to a series of platforms and watch Drones kill off the Flood over there. Eventually, Drones will appear and try to take you out, but you have plenty of carbine ammo with which to kill them. Warp over to the second platform, and from there make your way to the opposite side of the room via another warp. Head into the white door here, blasting down any zombies that get in your way, before more Drones arrive to take you out.

Please, Make Yourself At Home

Stay Ahead of the Wave of Flood Sweeping Through High Charity

Some dark passages await, so be sure to flip on your flashlight. It's no substitute for the stealthing ability of the Arbiter, but it does serve some purpose at times. In the first hallway you come to, you can grab an energy blade; as usual, it's quite useful against the Flood zombies you'll encounter.

Keep fighting until you reach a room with Brutes and Jackals; you'll have to dispatch all of them amidst what sounds like a chorus made entirely of insane people, a la the moon monolith in 2001. Get out of the room before you go berserk. Another one lies beyond, with a melee twist Drones and zombies. Push on until you reach an elevator, then head up. Be sure you have an energy blade before you do; you can find one in the Drone/zombie room if you need one.

Sanctified



Just wait at the rear of the room for the Flood to come for you, then cut through them and make your way to the end of the level.

This large chamber is the scene of a pitched battle between Flood and Covenant, and the Flood's going to win. After the elevator reaches its destination, back up against the wall and wait for the fun to begin. Eventually, the zombies will overrun the Covenant forces, then start tracking you down, but if you have an energy sword, you should be able to run right through them towards the door on the far side of the room. A lift here will take you further up.

Once More, With Feeling

Find a Way Onto the Forerunner Ship

Although the title of this subchapter would seem to be the perfect opportunity to have Master Chief burst out in song, he regrettably declines the invitation. There isn't much to say about the final room of the level; cut your way through the Flood and Covenant forces to the panel at the end of the room to get onto the Forerunner ship.

The Great Journey

Your A**, My Size-24 Hoof

Crush Any Brutes in Your Path

This one can be rather tough, so don't feel too frustrated if things don't go as planned. At the outset of the mission, you'll probably want to man the Spectre's turret and fight alongside the Wraith that your friend is manning. Your goal here is to fight until you reach the end of the beach,

at which point you'll come to a passage, but getting there is the hard part, as numerous Ghosts and Wraiths stand in your way.



Jacking this Wraith will make it a lot easier to get to the passage on the far side of the beach.

Your best bet will probably be to fight until you come to the first enemy Wraith, then jack that. Doing so will give you two Wraiths, one of which you can use to distract the enemy dropship that comes along to strafe the beach while you concentrate your fire on the Brutes and other Wraiths that guard the doorway. When you think you've cleared enough of a passage, burst through and get ready for some intense fights.

Commandeer the Scarab

As soon as you pass through the doors, you'll find yourself in the possession of the meanest teammates a guy could ever have: a pair of Hunters. Of course, the fact that you have Hunters on your side presages some fierce opposition, and indeed it will appear in the first room you come to, where a horde of Brutes will use turrets to blast away at your friends. What you need to do is run up the ramp on the side of the room and distract the Brutes for as long as it takes for your Hunters to follow you. When they do, they should slice through any opposition without much trouble, but if they have to stand up to turret fire for any length of time, the results won't be pretty.



Protect your Hunters, and they'll serve you quite well.

In the second room, try to maneuver yourself around the pathway to get the attention of the Brutes before they start shelling your Hunters with rounds from their Brute shots. Once the Hunters close in, they'll make quick work of the enemies. The next room is a bridge, and your Hunters aren't likely to survive, as a dropship will come along and pelt you and your friends. If you're solo by this point, just grab a beam rifle and start sniping away at the enemies on the far side of the bridge; the ship will eventually retreat, letting you pass on.

The next room you'll come to features a Brute fortification. Before you take them on, though, dispatch the Jackals with the energy sword; this will free up the upper level of the room, letting you dart from side to side, flinging dual-wielded needler ammo all over the place. If you wish, you can set free the various prisoners in the room by shooting at the small energy-field generators on the outside of their cells; the two Hunters on the lower level will obviously be useful. Don't worry about keeping them fresh for any upcoming threats; you're almost to the Scarab.

Backseat Driver

Escort Johnson's Scarab to the Control Room

In fact, the next hallway will lead to the Scarab, which has already been commandeered by Sarge. The real Sarge, that is; the human one. Your goals are congruous, for the moment, so hop into a Banshee and cover him as he heads to the Control Room.

This little segment is broken in two. The first segment pits the Scarab and yourself against three Wraiths; you'll have to destroy the Wraiths, as it appears that Sergeant is completely incapable of actually aiming his Death Star beam. (Although he seems to be a pro at piloting the Scarab;

obviously a skill taught in basic training.) So, you'll have to take out the Wraiths yourself. We found it easiest to just land the Banshee and jack the Wraiths one by one, but your mileage may vary.



Maybe we're cowards, but we preferred hanging around in here to getting shot to pieces outside.

After the Wraiths are dead, the Scarab will take a long trip through a narrow canyon, being fired upon all the while by Banshees and turrets. If you're playing on a level of difficulty above Normal, then you're probably going to die here. A lot. The Scarab itself is indestructible, though, so hey - land your Banshee on it and hide in the small passageway leading down to the controls. This will protect you from all incoming fire, and Sarge can get through the canyon just fine without you.

When the Scarab comes to a standstill, though, you'll need to clear out any remaining enemies so that Sarge can fire the main cannon at the Control Room. Your Banshee will have long since slid off the top of the Scarab, so you'll have to hop down one of the tank's leg, jack a Wraith (or both of them), then use the Wraiths to shoot down the Banshees. You can try to use the Banshee on the beach, as well, but be sure to keep it in good condition, as you'll need to use it to reach the Control Room.

Delusions and Grandeur

Enter the Control Room, and Deal with Tartarus

After Sarge blows away the door, fly over to the control room and stroll in. Your first major challenge will be dealing with a half-dozen or so Brutes. The trick here is to fall underneath the glass portion of the flooring; the tight corridors below the room will let you deal with the Brutes

one-on-one, and let you use their Brute shots against them when they drop down. For any stragglers above, the old stealth+grenade trick should finish the job.

Your duel with Tartarus proves that he's worthy of his namesake - in Greek myth, it was the place where deposed gods were imprisoned. In theory, he's not difficult; Sarge will stand back and use his beam rifle on the baddie to drop his shields, at which point you and your Elite buddies will wail away on him, then repeat the process until he's dead. In practice...not so easy. He's quick, for such a big guy, and will track you relentlessly while you jump around the three platforms that've been set up. If he catches up to you, you're dead, as his hammer deals one-hit kills almost without fail.



Although Tartarus is unkillable while his shields are up, they drop fairly often, thanks to Sarge. Use that opportunity to take him out!

There isn't much advice to give except to jump around a lot to avoid his melee attacks. Press home your attack on him while you have other Elites around to give him multiple targets, and use the small barriers scattered around the central area to block him from having an easy path to you. The saving grace here is that he pauses after Sarge drops his shields, giving you a couple of seconds in which to unload all you have on him; you should be able to find plenty of plasma rifles and ammo for your carbine on the upper and lower levels, either of which will do the job eventually. He will occasionally be joined by more Brutes; when this occurs, just run away; Sarge will eventually take care of the Brutes, and you'll have more Elites coming in every once in a while as well to give them multiple targets. In the end, though, all it comes down to is listening for Sarge's beam rifle's shots, then turning and blasting at Tartarus until his shields come back up. Lather, rinse, repeat, and you'll be done.

And by done, we mean done. That's the end of the game. Yeah, we were surprised, too.... Oh

well, here's to waiting for Halo 3!

Multiplayer

Check back later for tips on the multiplayer modes of Halo 2!